

Balance of Threat Theory and the Case of Yugoslavia, 1943 – 1964

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## **Introduction**

Since 1945 Yugoslavia has often occupied a unique, prominent, and sometimes unwanted, place on the world stage. The role this country has played and the amount of attention it received was quite often out of proportion to the modest resources and power Yugoslavia possessed.<sup>1</sup> This is especially true of the period 1945 - 1964 when Yugoslavia played a significant role in Cold War international politics.

Historically this story is intriguing for a number of reasons. Yugoslavia was the first state after the Soviet Union to impose communism on itself rather than having communism imposed on it by outside forces. It was the only such state in Eastern Europe throughout the communist period, and the only such state in the Soviet camp until the People's Republic of China was declared in 1949. From 1945 until 1948 Yugoslavia pursued an aggressive internationalist foreign policy that one would expect of a zealous communist state loyal to the Soviet center. "The Yugoslav regime in 1945 was more pro-Russian than any other Communist-dominated government in Eastern Europe."<sup>2</sup> But then in 1948 it was kicked out of the socialist brotherhood—much to the surprise of Western observers and policy-makers. These same policy-makers quickly grasped the significance of this event, and began to help Yugoslavia militarily and economically. The Soviet Union was extremely aggressive toward Yugoslavia, and used all measures short of war in an attempt to oust the Yugoslavian leadership. Once Stalin died, relations between the two states improved, but only for a short period. Meanwhile, Yugoslavia's relations with the West deteriorated, although not as much as

with the Soviet Union, and the small Balkan state began to associate more and more with third world states.

In the fascinating details of all of this, many different forces can be seen at work. It is fertile ground for testing a wide variety of political theories at all levels of analysis. At the systemic level you can see classic power politics: the balance of power, limits of power and zero-sum games that strongly support the realist tradition. On a second image level you can see how the legitimacy enjoyed by Tito and his regime enabled him to carry out a program that few other communist leaders would have dared to attempt. If ideology is important to you, then you will find plenty of ammunition to back up your arguments in the bitter rhetorical battles that took place between Belgrade and Moscow, and between East and West. First image interpretation? You can find no better justification than the control-hungry Stalin or the ambitious Tito. All these things were at work, and in different times and different situations, some of them were more important than others.

In this paper I argue that balance of threat theory provides the best explanation of the actions these major actors—Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and the United States—took in international politics during this period.

### *Methodology*

I use the case of Yugoslavia from World War II to 1964 to test balance of threat theory. Thus we are working on the “null hypothesis;” that is, we are not pitting this theory against other theories to see which has more explanatory power (Lakatos’ “three-

cornered fights between rival theories and experiment”), but judging the theory solely on its own merits (“a two-cornered fight between theory and experiment”).<sup>3</sup> While a single case cannot confirm or disprove a theory, or displace rival theories as the predominant research programme, this is a valuable exercise because it increases our knowledge of the theory and its limits. Besides, what good are theories if they are only generated and not applied?<sup>4</sup> Yugoslavia is an excellent case for testing this theory for several reasons: First, there are many possible competing explanations. This makes it a tough case to “prove.” Secondly, there is wide variance in the dependent, independent, and intervening variables during the period under study.\* This within-case congruence procedure allows us to control for competing explanations and determine just how much of an effect the different variables have on the outcomes, while still maintaining uniform background conditions, further controlling for the effect of third variables.<sup>5</sup>

To test the theory, I will state the core assumptions and hypotheses of balance of threat theory, and predict what outcomes we should see in this case. I will examine the historical data. I will divide the case chronologically in order to determine if other

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\* For example: The dependant variable (alignment) changed dramatically when Yugoslavia went from being a close ally of the USSR (1945 – 1948) to being an enemy of the Soviet Union after the Cominform expulsion in 1948. Yugoslavia became a de facto ally of the United States in the 1950s. The independent variable (threat) also varied considerably over time. After the Cominform expulsion, the Soviet Union planned an invasion of Yugoslavia and the satellites that neighbored Yugoslavia mobilized for war. In the mid 1950s the threat was eliminated when there was a rapprochement between the USSR and Yugoslavia. Third variables also varied, and the example of state leaders shows a tremendous variance. The change in Soviet foreign policy was almost immediate when Stalin died.

variables, which fluctuate over time (changes in leadership, changes in the international system, etc.) change the expected outcomes. In this manner we can make several observations out of one case.<sup>6</sup> I will then see if this case confirms or disproves the theory.

This methodology will become clearer in the next chapter where I state the specifics of balance of threat theory. The third chapter will cover the period from World War II until the Soviet-Yugoslav split (from approximately 1943 – 1948). The fourth chapter will examine the period immediately following the split in 1948 until 1953. This chapter will include the reactions of the major players to the split, and is the period where Yugoslavia was most threatened. Next I will examine the period 1954 – 1964, which saw the post-Stalin Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement and the second split. Each historical chapter will examine the overall state of East-West relations, Yugoslavia's relations with East and West, and then an analysis of how well balance of threat theory stands up in explaining the given time period. The final chapter will provide an overview of the conclusions and the value of balance of threat theory as it applies to this case.

## **Balance of Threat Theory**

In this chapter I will discuss balance of threat theory as developed by Stephen Walt in two of his works: Origins of Alliances, and Revolution and War.<sup>7</sup> I will state the core assumptions of the theory, the theory itself, the variables that are at work in the theory, the hypotheses and the predictions that the theory generates, and discuss the relationship between Walt's balance of threat theory and Neorealism.

Walt bases his balance of threat theory generally on Kenneth Waltz's theory of structural realism, also known as Neorealism.<sup>8</sup> Waltz's theory is deductive, scientific, and based on microeconomic theory. The core assumptions of Neorealist theory are:<sup>9</sup>

1. States, the main unit of action in the international structure, are rational, unitary actors who seek, at a minimum, security (which is their primary concern), and at a maximum, global hegemony.
2. The state system is anarchic.
3. States are not differentiated by their functions, but by their capabilities (power).

The interrelationship between these assumptions needs some elaboration. The second assumption means that there is no over-arching international government; the states inhabit a "self-help" system. The first and third assumptions are related in two



ways. First, that “states are rational, unitary actors” and that “states are not differentiated by function,” means that since all states have the same function, what goes on within the state, the type of regime that governs the state, and all other second image factors are subordinate to systems-level factors in determining policy-making outcomes. Since all states have the same function, the state cancels out in the equation of calculating policy choices. The state is “bracketed” or put into a “black box” because the most important determinants for foreign policy come from the state system.<sup>10</sup> The second way in which the first and second assumptions are related is the concern for security and power. The hierarchy within the anarchic system is not determined by how the states function, but by how much power they wield. Power is the instrument that states use to fulfill their primary goal: survival, independence, sovereignty—in short, their security. It is also the tool that they need to accomplish any goals above basic security: anything from establishing a regional hegemony to world domination. The microeconomic basis of the theory comes into play as various states try to maintain their security against those states that are striving for something more than security. Just as Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” guides the market and an equilibrium is achieved between the factors of supply and demand, so too, in the states system, is an equilibrium achieved when various states strive for security and expansion through power. This equilibrium is the balance of power. States seeking survival balance against the power of revisionist states in order to safeguard the status quo.

In Origins of Alliances Walt tries to apply this theory to explain alliance

choices, and, like Waltz, emphasizes the scientific approach. In analyzing balancing and bandwagoning behavior, Walt finds that Neorealism's focus on the distribution of capabilities provides an inadequate explanation for alliance choices between states. He turns his attention to threats. Walt argues that states do not balance against power alone (although power certainly plays a significant role in alliance choices), but against threats.<sup>11</sup> Logically and intuitively his argument is strong. If a weak state is on good terms with a powerful state, the weak state will be unlikely to balance against the stronger state. In fact, the weaker state likely will benefit from the security generated by its good relations with the stronger state. But if the weaker state perceives the stronger state as a threat, then the weaker state will balance against the stronger state in order to protect itself. The following are factors in whether a state judges others as threats:<sup>12</sup>

1. Aggregate power: a state's total resources (population, industry, economy, etc.).
2. Geographic proximity: "the ability to project power declines with distance."
3. Offensive (military) power: "the ability to threaten the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another state at an acceptable cost."
4. Perceived intentions: aggressive states are threatening.

The variable of intentions is problematic in regards to Neorealism. Whereas

Neorealism treats the state as a black box, balance of threat theory requires the box to be opened in order to gauge the level of threat. This analysis of second and even first image factors is even more evident in Walt's second treatment of the theory.

In Revolution and War Walt uses balance of threat theory to try to explain why states that undergo revolutions sometimes find themselves involved in wars. Again, Neorealist theory is unsatisfying for Walt. The Neorealist explanation for revolutionary states going to war is that revolutions shift the systemic balance of power. Walt applies balance of threat theory to such cases and argues that revolutions increase the security competition between states because both the revolutionary state and other states begin to see each other as threats for a number of reasons, including:<sup>13</sup>

1. Capabilities in a number of areas change when a state undergoes a revolution, thus increasing the state's sense of vulnerability (and, therefore, it is more likely to view other states as threatening) and the perception of other states that they can take advantage of this vulnerability.
2. Revolutionary ideologies and their recurrent themes often seem threatening to other states and also encourage revolutionary leaders to perceive the outside world as hostile.
3. Uncertainty and misinformation increases during a revolution.

These factors combine to form a "spiral of suspicions" between the revolutionary state

and other states. Again, these factors are not a part of the Neorealist vision of the world. Concepts such as ideologies, perceptions, and misinformation are antithetical to the power focused Neorealist paradigm. Indeed, the very subject of the book—how revolutions can lead to war—is about how “a distinctly unit level phenomenon” (revolution) has an effect on outcomes in the states’ system. This leads us to consider the question: “Is balance of threat theory Neorealism”?

Walt’s claim that balance of threat theory is based on the core assumptions of structural realism means that it is at least a refinement of Neorealism. But the consideration of factors other than capabilities and structure open balance of threat theory and Neorealist theory up to charges of degeneration and “ad hocism” because balance of threat theory goes outside of the bounds of Neorealist thought in order to explain some of the many phenomena that structural realism has difficulty in explaining.<sup>14</sup> Balance of threat theory opens up the “black box” of the state in an attempt to provide better understanding of how systems-level phenomena are affected by unit-level factors. This can be seen as refuting the core assumption that the state is a unitary actor. But I applaud Walt’s attempt to open the box. By delving into the inner workings of the state Walt sheds light on the work of the invisible hand in the international security market because he shows how the equilibrium is achieved. It is achieved by states balancing not just against power alone, but by the threat that that power can represent.

Balance of threat theory also deviates from Neorealism in that it seems to be

deductive, and influenced by the lessons of history, rather than ahistorical (or at least indifferent to the lessons of history) as Neorealism is.<sup>15</sup> In this sense it seems closer to classical realism. On the other hand, Walt clings to the strict scientific approach espoused by Waltz, and tries to incorporate empirical evidence into the rigors of the scientific approach within the Neorealist framework. In this manner, Walt takes historical observations, explains them in terms of his theory, and generates corresponding hypotheses. These are the hypotheses (based on balance of threat theory and based on inductive observations that fit within balance of threat theory) that are stated in Origins of Alliances, that we will test:<sup>16</sup>

1. "States ally to balance against threats rather than against power alone."
2. "Ideology is less powerful than balancing as a motive for alignment."
3. Foreign aid and penetration alone are not powerful causes for alignment.

Although discussed earlier, the first hypothesis—the core hypothesis of balance of threat theory—deserves further emphasis. It differs from traditional balance of power theory in that Walt believes that states will not necessarily join other states in balancing against the most powerful state in the system, but against the most threatening state. However, the most powerful state may certainly be the most threatening, and therefore, create an impetus for a coalition to be formed against it. Again, this is logical, if a state is on good terms with a powerful state, it has no need to fear it, and its

security is actually enhanced by the good relations. So how do states go about determining what states represent threats to them? By the threat factors of aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and perceived intentions, which again, are all intuitively sound.

The first factor in determining threats, aggregate power (a state's total resources as represented by population, industry, economy, technology, etc.) is an important factor because a state is not likely to be viewed as a threat if it is weak, indeed, other states are likely to view it as an easy target. Geographic proximity ("states that are nearby pose a greater threat than those that are far away") is also logical because a state that is further away will find it more difficult to project its power to threaten another state.<sup>17</sup> Offensive power not only includes military power but also "fifth columns" abroad. There is a certain degree of cost-benefit analysis involved here. "All else being equal, states with large offensive capabilities are more likely to provoke an alliance than are those that are incapable of attacking because of geography, military posture, or something else."<sup>18</sup> This means that offensive power is certainly relative, so that if a certain state has a large military, this can be mitigated by several factors, including (among other things): the military power of other states, and offensive-defensive advantage which is determined in part by technology and terrain, and even by international "public opinion."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, a strong state will be likely to balance against a threat, but a weak state will be likely to bandwagon with a threatening state because it will see little benefit to putting up a fight against a vastly superior foe. A

state may not take advantage of its relative offensive power because it does not want to be condemned in international circles, or it does not wish to create a strong reaction to its aggressive action. Also, once a threat recedes, alignments against that threat will tend to break up, especially as they begin to see each other as the more likely threat. This is especially pertinent to wartime alignments. Victorious coalitions rarely last for long after a war has ended. Furthermore, since offensive power is not limited to military might, but also can include subversion, this can pose a threat also. This threat is not an easy one to counter in a traditional sense, and this can make it all the more frightening. Conducting internal or external balancing by building up one's armed forces or creating alliances does little to offset the threat posed by "fifth columns." But, the key factor in all this is the final one: perceived intentions.

A state may be powerful in aggregate resources and military might, and be situated near another state, but that second state may not perceive the first as a threat. These factors, however, would certainly weigh heavily in the equation. The first state would have to make a concerted effort to assuage the fears of the second. It is in the perception factor that we really need to delve into the inner workings of the state and the individuals who lead the states. Ideological antipathy, overt military build-ups, covert subversive activities, economic exploitation, revisionist strategies, and harsh rhetoric—all these can be taken as signs of aggressive intentions. If, however, two states are alike, enjoy defensive advantages, face a common enemy, or share a common ideology, then they will be less likely to view each other as threats.

The second hypothesis states that ideology is subordinate to threats as a motive for alignment. Ideological similarity or compatibility is a luxury, not a requisite. Therefore, states that feel secure will let ideology play a greater role in alliance choices, while states that feel threatened will look to almost anyone who can enhance their security for help regardless of regime type or ideological persuasion. Similarly, "states that lack domestic legitimacy will be more likely to seek ideological alliances to increase internal and external support."<sup>20</sup> In a sense, this is a utilization of ideology to counter an internal threat. The converse of this, however, is that states that are domestically solid do not need to seek ideological alliances to shore themselves up. The bottom line is that one can only look to others to be their friends if those others do not represent a threat. This links this hypothesis concerning ideology closely with the central hypothesis concerning threat. Indeed, the balance of threat hypothesis takes precedence over the ideological one. Not only is the ideological subordination to threat consistent with the general theory epistemologically, but this is also sound empirically. History is replete with instances of dissimilar states joining together to counter a threat, as the two World Wars illustrate. Not only does Walt observe that ideologically dissimilar states can ally, but he also observes that ideologically similar states can become enemies. He finds this particularly true in the case of highly centralized and hierarchical ideological movements, such as Leninism. Again, this can be related to the perception of threat. The center of the movement can begin to perceive a rising state in the periphery to be a threat to its primacy in the movement. The result is fragile,



conflictive, and, therefore, unsustainable alliances.

The final hypothesis again states that foreign aid and penetration are subordinate to threat as a motive for alignment. Aid, for Walt, is more a symptom of alignment than a cause for alignment. As such, it provides the donor with little influence over the recipient state. This is exacerbated if the donor state has a weak or decentralized decision-making apparatus (such as a democracy, for example). If, however, the recipient finds itself under threat, the donor will have more influence over the threatened state. Just as granting foreign aid is sometimes motivated by a desire to influence decision-making in another state, attempts at political motivation are also similarly motivated. This course can have a backlash, however, if the state being penetrated perceives that the intentions of the other state are less than friendly. "Penetration is more effective when the objectives are limited. Therefore, the more intrusive the act of penetration, the greater the probability that it will have a negative effect on alignment." Furthermore, penetration is more difficult against closed societies than open ones.<sup>21</sup>

If these hypotheses hold true in the case of Yugoslavia during the early Cold War, we can say that balance of threat theory is upheld in this case. Each of these hypotheses generates predictions. This is what we should look for to see if these hypotheses are upheld.

*Predictions based on the hypotheses*

Based on the first hypothesis, we would expect to see all the major actors balancing against the most threatening state, not necessarily the most powerful state. This is a difficult determination to make because the many intangibles involved in gauging power and perceptions of threat are not readily measurable.\* We will have to rely on public and private statements of officials and state actions to determine what the actors are reacting to. The third and fourth threat factors relating to geographic proximity and offensive (military) power are more readily measurable and are closely related. A state with a large military that cannot project its power over a long distance will not seem too threatening. And, again, power is relative; one state may be more powerful than another, but can it use that power to gain its objectives at “an acceptable cost”? Therefore we should see the actors balancing against the largest offensive threat, but should also keep in mind that whoever has the most offensive power may not use it if the cost of victory will be too dear. For all actors concerned in this case, we would expect to see them balance against threats.

Yugoslavia has some mitigating factors involved in its alliance choices, however, since it is a lesser power. If Yugoslavia is weak and/or has no one else to turn

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\* But because power is relative we should be able to make fairly accurate estimations of how the actors, the US, USSR and Yugoslavia stand vis-à-vis one another. This is especially true when comparing Soviet and American power to Yugoslav power. It will be more problematic in determining the power of the United States and the Soviet

to, we should see it conducting bandwagoning. If Yugoslavia is strong and/or has viable alternative alliance choices, we should see her following a balancing foreign policy. The condition of war and peace as an influence on balancing and bandwagoning behavior applies to all the actors. We should see them balancing against the greatest threat, whether in wartime or peacetime. However, should a war end, if they are allied, the victorious alliance should fall apart because the threat has disappeared. Obviously we will have World War II, the disintegration of the Grand Alliance, and the subsequent Cold War in mind here, but again this is problematic as far as measuring purposes: What caused the falling out between the two superpowers? Were they balancing against each other's power or balancing against each other because they began to see each other as a threat?

As far as ideology is concerned, we should see it playing a greater role in alliance choices if there is little threat, if two states are similar, if the state feels secure (the state is strong or has a defensive advantage), or if a state has little legitimacy domestically. Ideology will have less of an influence on alliance choices if a state feels threatened and/or enjoys legitimacy domestically.

An examination of foreign aid should be enlightening because Yugoslavia enjoyed many patrons during the period under study. During the Second World War Britain was her main supplier, the Soviet Union was her patron after the war until the split in 1948, and the United States provided much material and financial support after

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Union relative to each other.

that. This, therefore, should provide us fertile ground for testing the hypotheses concerning foreign aid. Overall, based on Walt's hypotheses, we should see that foreign aid has little effect on alliance choices and provides the donor little leverage over the recipient's policy choices *unless*: the recipient faces a serious threat, is more dependent on the donor than the donor is on the recipient, or has more of a motivation to get aid than the donor has for wanting to give it. Furthermore, since the totalitarian Soviet Union had a more centralized decision-making apparatus than the democratic Western Allies, we should see it applying more leverage in relation to aid programs than Britain or the United States.

And finally, political penetration will apply specifically to the attempts of both East and West to influence Yugoslavia. We should see penetration attempts largely failing due to the closed nature of the Communist regime in Yugoslavia. These attempts should also meet severe resistance if they are extremely intrusive and aggressive. We will now turn to the historical data.

## Balance of Threat Theory Hypotheses and Predictions

Hypothesis	Prediction
States balance against threats	States that represent a threat will provoke an alliance
	Stronger states will balance, weaker will bandwagon
	Wartime alliances will disintegrate
Ideology subordinate to threat in alliance choices	States will create alliances for security, not for ideological reasons
	Similar states will ally (provided security condition is met)
	Alliances in Communist movement will be fragile
	States that are internally and externally secure will seek ideological alliances
Aid and penetration are no causes for alignment	Aid and penetration will not determine alignment
	Donor will have leverage through aid only when recipient threatened
	Decentralized states will have trouble using aid for leverage
	Penetration harder against closed societies
	Penetration will be seen as threat if intentions are not limited

Table 1

## 1943 – 1948\*

### *General Situation*

The Second World War in Europe is often seen as a continuation of the First World War after a respite of some twenty years. The major difference between the two wars, however, was in the way they were terminated. True, Germany was defeated in both cases, but, with the implementation of the policy of unconditional surrender in the second war, a power vacuum was created in Western Europe.<sup>22</sup> President Roosevelt's policy of unconditional surrender created the conditions which enabled Stalin to fulfill his plans, embraced early in the war, for creating a security zone to protect the Soviet Union from another invasion from the west. So the Red Army occupied Eastern Europe and filled part of the vacuum. A *cordon sanitaire* in reverse was created. At Yalta, the Big Three had agreed to the creation of governments in Eastern Europe that were both friendly to the Soviet Union and democratic. Such a dichotomy could not, however, be realized. Democratically elected East European governments, especially in the case of Poland (the keystone to the Soviet security zone), would never be friendly toward the Soviet Union. This difference in interpretations of the Yalta agreement became the crux of the breakdown of cooperative relations between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. Britain and the United States could only sit helplessly by while the Soviets, backed by the might of the Red Army, installed regimes favorable to themselves.

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\* Most of this chapter comes from a term paper titled "Soviet-Yugoslav Relations, 1945 – 1948," written for GFIR 756, "Soviet- and Russian-American Relations Since 1945," taught by Mr. Allen Lynch, Spring 1999, University of Virginia.

The United States was the only state to emerge from World War II richer than when it went into the war. She had over half of the world's manufacturing capabilities, a monopoly over atomic weapons, and the greatest naval and air fleets ever assembled, but what the United States did not have was the intention of filling the European power vacuum, and the other European powers were unable to fill it.\* So, despite being the most powerful state in the world, the power vacuum in Europe was exacerbated by the quick American withdrawal and demobilization after the war. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, emerged from the war horribly mauled economically, industrially, agriculturally, and demographically because the most important population, industrial, and agricultural regions of the country had been the scenes of savage fighting; not once, but twice. And although the Soviets also conducted a postwar demobilization—the Red Army was reduced by about two thirds—it was still the most powerful force in the world, thanks to the drastic American demobilization.† There was, therefore, little that the Western Allies could do about Soviet policies in Eastern Europe.

Europe itself was in poor shape after being the scene of six years of warfare. Conditions were horrible and the people were on their heels. Europe was fertile ground for change. The rise of Communist movements in Italy and France seemed to be part of a

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\* At the end of the war the US had 12.5 million men under arms, 1,200 warships and 2,000 heavy bombers. Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, (New York: Random House, 1987), p. 358.

† After its demobilization, the Soviet military still had 175 divisions, 25,000 tanks (a good number of them the top-of-the line T-34 model), and 19,000 aircraft. Kennedy, pp. 362 – 363.

general Communist offensive, especially when considered in light of the Soviet moves in Eastern Europe, Iran, the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, and the insurrection in Greece. In response to the increase in tensions a series of military alliances were made by Western European states (the Dunkirk Treaty between Britain and France signed in March 1947; the Brussels Treaty added the Benelux countries in March 1948).<sup>23</sup> The United States moved to contain this expansion with the announcement of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, and the Marshall Plan that June. These moves were seen, in turn, by the Soviets as an attempt by the West to wrest control of Eastern Europe from the USSR. As Louis J. Halle so eloquently and succinctly put it,

What we see throughout this history is the dynamism of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Moscow, anticipating a threat from the West, expands its empire in that direction, thereby provoking a reaction that confirms its anticipation. Washington, reacting in fear of Moscow's spreading tyranny, provokes the spread and intensification of that tyranny by moving to contain it, thereby confirming the fear on which it had acted.<sup>24</sup>

#### *Converging Interests: Soviet-Yugoslav Relations, 1943 – 1947*

During the Second World War, two resistance groups emerged in Yugoslavia, the Cetniks under Draza Mihailovic, and the partisans under Josip Broz Tito. The first, under the Royal Yugoslav army officer Mihailovic, adopted a cautious, conservative, and patient approach in resisting Axis occupation. In practical terms this meant that his Cetnik forces would wait until the approach of Allied forces and the elimination of all



other rivals before rising up. This strategy translated into a lack of support from the Grand Alliance in general, and the British—the biggest supporter of underground movements in the Balkans—in particular because the Grand Alliance, which was on the ropes until the German defeat at Stalingrad, wanted to see results in the form of dead Germans. Mihailovic was not producing enough results in this manner, and at the Cairo Conference in December 1943 the decision was taken to cut off aid to Mihailovic's forces. Furthermore, compounding his problems, Mihailovic's Cetniks sought to achieve, not so much a liberated Yugoslavia, as a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia (hence the policy of eliminating rivals before resisting the occupation forces) under the rule of the monarchy in exile or a military dictator (read Mihailovic). This emphasis on Serb domination translated into a lack of domestic support for the Cetniks from almost every quarter of the multinational Yugoslav population, and the anti-Communist Mihailovic initiated a costly civil war against Tito's partisans.<sup>25</sup>

Tito's partisans, on the other hand, although Communist, sought the establishment of a liberated federal (and Communist) Yugoslavia as their primary goal thus assuring broad popular support from the various Yugoslav nationalities who were sickened by the bloody interethnic warfare. Furthermore, Tito was aggressive in fighting the occupation forces, thereby assuring support from the members of the Grand Alliance, even though Tito was simultaneously engaged in a civil war against the royalist Cetniks, and even though he had announced to the British as early as 1943 his intention of installing a Communist regime in Yugoslavia at the conclusion of the war. That is because if the

Allies were interested in results in the form of dead German soldiers (and they were with one notable exception to be discussed below), then Tito and his partisans were producing results. Tito's aggressiveness, while costly, was extremely successful in driving out the occupation forces of Nazi Germany from Yugoslavia.<sup>26</sup>

It was thus that Yugoslavia emerged from the Second World War as the only state that had liberated itself from the fascist occupiers.\* Josip Broz Tito and his partisans who were responsible for this movement therefore enjoyed a legitimacy that few other leaders in the newly liberated countries enjoyed. They were also devout communists, and as such they instituted a regime that followed very closely along the lines of the Stalinist model. Indeed, "the Yugoslav constitution of January 1946...unabashedly copied the Soviet constitution of 1936."<sup>27</sup> Former Carter National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski described post war Yugoslavia as "the most orthodox, the most Stalinist, the most Soviet type of regime in Eastern Europe at the time,"<sup>28</sup> and further: "...the Yugoslavs at this stage were ideologically more Stalinist than Stalin."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, in 1945 Edvard Kardelj, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CC CPY), suggested to the Soviet Ambassador to Belgrade that Yugoslavia should be incorporated into the USSR.<sup>30</sup> At this point in time, Yugoslavian interests were defined by a communist ideology of the revolutionary, internationalist type. That is not to say that Yugoslavia did not value its independence or did not seek greater power and

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\* The Red Army liberated the northeast corner of Serbia including Belgrade in October 1944, but Yugoslavian partisans drove Axis forces from the rest of the country.

greater glory—it did—but greater power and greater glory for socialist Yugoslavia (in Yugoslav eyes) was also greater power and greater glory not only for the international Communist movement, but also for the “land of socialism,” the Soviet Union.

Ideologically this fit in nicely with both the doctrine of communist internationalism, and with communist nationalism. Tito and his lieutenants were true believers in pursuing the internationalist project, especially if it was to their benefit.

In addition to the coincidence of ideological interests there was also the coincidence of other interests. The strongest of these was the defeat of Nazi Germany in the Second World War, which led to strong cooperation that carried over into the early post war period. Obviously there was close military cooperation, but this cooperation could be seen in the economic and foreign policy spheres as well.

Militarily, the Soviet Union provided much support for Yugoslavia during the war and immediately following it. From 1944 until 1946\*, the Soviet Union supplied Yugoslavia with enough equipment to outfit thirty-two infantry divisions, as well as equipment for aviation, tank and artillery units.<sup>31</sup> Tito wanted to expand this assistance and took steps to do so. Stalin supported such measures.

In January 1946, Tito informed the Soviet Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Ivan Sadchikov, that he wanted to expand the military assistance received from the USSR to

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\* From 1942 until 1944 most of the Allied support came from Great Britain in the form of arms, ammunition, supplies, close air support and advisors. The adventurous Fitzroy MacLean provides a fascinating first-hand account of the British mission in Yugoslavia in the second half of his book, Eastern Approaches, (London: The Reprint Society, 1951). The Soviets did not displace the British as the main suppliers of the Yugoslavs

include the creation of Soviet-Yugoslav joint-stock companies in the military industrial sector and that he wanted to send a military delegation to Moscow to negotiate such an undertaking. Tito again informed the Soviet Ambassador, this time Sadchikov's successor Anatolii Lavrent'ev, of his desires, and that he himself would go to Moscow to negotiate this. On the twenty-ninth of April, Lavrent'ev told Tito that he had received a "positive response" for the proposed programs and for the visit to negotiate them.<sup>32</sup>

Among other issues (to be discussed below), Tito and Stalin discussed military and military-industrial assistance during a meeting in Moscow on May 27, 1946. Tito expressed interest in receiving reparations from Germany in the form of military factory equipment, and the joint production of artillery pieces with the USSR. Stalin pledged his support in creating a military industrial base, and further offered help in establishing professional development schools for officers, and the construction of naval shipbuilding yards and bases because he thought that a coastal defense fleet was necessary for Yugoslavia's security. An agreement for other materiel and a long-term loan for the development of the military-industrial complex were agreed to on June 8, 1946.<sup>33</sup>

The Yugoslavs proposed joint economic enterprises as well. "As early as 1944, Kardelj had raised the question of joint-stock enterprises with the USSR for the purpose of exploiting mineral deposits in Yugoslavia."<sup>34</sup> These proposals were restated early the next year, and the Yugoslavs submitted concrete proposals in late 1945 and early 1946. These matters were addressed during Tito's meeting with Stalin on May 27, 1946 in

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until the Red Army arrived in Yugoslavia.

Moscow. An agreement was signed early the next month (concurrently with the military agreement mentioned above) which provided the framework for the creation of joint-stock companies for mineral resource extraction and processing, civil aviation, shipping on the Danube, and a Yugoslav-Soviet Bank, with details for each of these enterprises to be worked out in separate negotiations. Technical assistance was also offered by the Soviets for other branches of the Yugoslav economy.<sup>35</sup>

In its foreign policy, Yugoslavia's enthusiasm for communist missionary work can be seen in many instances: its treaties of friendship and cooperation with other communist states, and the measures it adopted to spread communism.

In lieu of the annexation to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia settled for a twenty-year treaty of friendship, assistance and cooperation with the USSR and similar treaties with the other communist states.\* These agreements reflected the conception of the world communist movement that the Yugoslav leaders had at this time. They saw the movement as a fraternal bond between parties who were all trying to build a better (socialist) world.<sup>36</sup> This was a conception that the other East European communist leaders—leaders who relied on the power of the Red Army for the establishment and maintenance of their regimes, and who, therefore, had to follow the dictates of Moscow—could not share. They harbored no illusions of a fraternal organization.

Yugoslavia, however, did have this conception. Their enthusiasm for the

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\* Yugoslavia's enthusiasm is evident in the fact that they signed treaties of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance with Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria even before the Soviet Union did. Zbigniew K Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, (Cambridge: Harvard

resurrection of the Comintern in its new form, the Cominform, was probably due to a genuine feeling that this organization would be brotherly, rather than just an instrument with which Stalin could direct foreign parties, and that it would be an efficient means for exporting revolution. Indeed, the Yugoslavs were apparently disappointed with the pace of revolution as evidenced by Tito's criticism (under Stalin's orders) of West European parties in general and the French and Italian parties in particular for being too passive.<sup>37</sup> The Yugoslavs were anything but passive, as the examples of aid to the Greek rebels, the Trieste dispute and attempted formation of the Balkan Federation illustrate.

Yugoslavia supported the communist guerilla movement in Greece with supplies, training, and safe areas inside its Macedonian border. Stalin encouraged the rebellion and the Yugoslav support (but took no direct part), hoping to gain a strategically important area cheaply through a civil war rather than in a direct confrontation. Tito, for his part, hoped to incorporate portions of Greece into a Balkan Federation (more on this below) under his leadership, so he was not driven solely by a desire to see a Greek version of a workers' paradise, but also by a desire to increase his power and prestige. For a while it looked like Tito would succeed. The Greek rebels were bogging down the governmental forces and the British who were supporting them. An economic crisis forced the British to pull that support and on February 21, 1947, they notified the United States of their intention to abdicate their role in the Eastern Mediterranean. The United States assumed this responsibility and the result was the Truman Doctrine of containment

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University Press, 1971), pp. 55, 109.

elucidated in the President's speech to Congress requesting funding for an aid package not only to Greece, but also to Turkey.<sup>38</sup> This aid eventually turned the tide against the rebellion, but at first, the situation remained bad, so planning was begun to send two American divisions to Greece to combat the insurrection. It turned out that these forces were not needed.<sup>39</sup>

During the Second World War, Tito laid claim to the port-city of Trieste, then under Italian control, due to a large segment of the outlying population there being Slovene. This arrangement would also make sense because Yugoslavia needed a good port, and was on the winning side.<sup>40</sup> Italy had several deep-water ports and was on the losing side. The problem was that the Western allies had veto authority over post war settlements, and were not about to give the communist authorities in Belgrade control over Trieste. This was true especially after it became clear that the outcome of the matter would affect domestic support of the Western-backed Italian government which was having trouble holding its own against the Italian communist party.<sup>41</sup> As a result British and American forces moved in and prevented Tito's forces from occupying the city. Stalin ordered the Yugoslavs to give way saying, "I do not wish to begin the Third World War over the Trieste question."<sup>42</sup> By the way, the partisans moved into the region on 1 May 1945, so even at this early date there is a foreshadowing of the breakdown of cooperation in the Grand Alliance, although there are certainly earlier and more prominent examples than this one such as the blossoming dispute over the post war status of Poland.

A temporary dividing line was established between the Western allies and the Yugoslav forces, and negotiations over the disposition of the port started, but they were still at an impasse by September 1945. To resolve the question, a commission was established and each of the four great powers submitted proposals. Each of the four powers—The United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union—returned with different plans. The Soviet proposal was the same as the Yugoslav plan: Trieste and the rest of the region would become a republic of the Yugoslav federation and the port would have the status of a free port.<sup>43</sup> Tito thanked Stalin and Soviet foreign minister V. M. Molotov for their support in this matter during the May 27 meeting mentioned above.<sup>44</sup> In June 1946, the most moderate of the plans, the French version, was chosen as a temporary compromise, creating the Free Territory of Trieste and dividing its administration between the Western allies and the Yugoslavs.<sup>45</sup>

In January 1947 administration of the territory was turned over to the United Nations Security Council (although UNSC administration was ineffective because a governor could not be agreed upon). In the meantime, Yugoslavia held out in signing the peace treaty with Italy that had been agreed to the previous year because of the Trieste issue. They finally signed it in February 1947.<sup>46</sup> The next year the three Western allies issued a declaration returning the city and territory to Italy. Yugoslavia threatened war if Italian troops moved in and the West backed down, only turning over administrative functions to the Italians and not allowing the stationing of Italian troops there.<sup>47</sup> The bitterness of the dispute over Trieste is evident in the fact that it was not settled until



1954, and in an incident in 1946 when Yugoslavian forces shot down two American planes in the region.<sup>48</sup>

A further example of the coincidence of Yugoslav and Soviet interests is the Balkan Federation. It is unclear who originally conceived the idea of uniting Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania into a federation, Stalin or Tito, but for a while after the war the project was pursued.\* The Yugoslav and Bulgarian parties started discussions on the matter at the end of 1944. Tito probably wanted the federation for aggrandizement: His proposal was to make Bulgaria one of the republics within the Yugoslav Federative Republic (that is, subordinate to Yugoslavia). Stalin saw the federation as a means of bringing stability to the shaky Bulgarian regime and as a way of removing the label of belligerent from Bulgaria (Bulgaria was allied with Nazi Germany during the war). The main obstacle to the federation was the lack of a peace treaty ending the war with Albania and Bulgaria. This would have been a purely technical problem were it not for the fact that the Western allies could veto such a plan, which they did to a proposed Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation in the first half of 1945. The United States and Great Britain not only vetoed this project, but they also vetoed a treaty of alliance and mutual assistance between the two countries. After these rebuffs, the project was put on hold, and talks

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\* Debate over the origin of the concept of the federation raged even within the communist party a decade later. During an address to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on July 9, 1955, Bulganin said that Stalin proposed the idea to Bulgarian leader Georgii Dimitrov. V. M. Molotov said that Tito came up with the idea. See Leonid Gibianskii, "The Soviet Bloc and the Initial Stage of the Cold War: Archival Documents on Stalin's Meetings with Communist Leaders of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, 1946 – 1948," in *Cold War International History Project*, Issue 10, March

between the Bulgarians and Yugoslavs were broken off. The next year, the Bulgarians resurrected the prospect of the federation, but both the Soviets and the Yugoslavs rejected the proposal for the time being: the Soviets because of security reasons-- they did not want to agitate the West; the Yugoslavs because of ideological reasons-- they did not like the regime in Sofia (it was still nominally a monarchy and the communist party there was weak).<sup>49</sup>

Many of the same issues applied with regard to Albania. Both Stalin and Tito favored including Albania in a federation for many of the same reasons that they wanted Bulgaria in a Balkan federation. Incorporation of Albania, and treaties with her faced the same international constraints as with Bulgaria, and during the May 27, 1946 meeting between Stalin and Tito the federation plan was shelved, with Stalin citing concerns about agitating the Western powers. He proposed a gradual approach to integrating Albania: first signing a treaty of friendship, then, after a peace treaty had been concluded, the formation of a federation (the Albanian communist leader Enver Hoxha had already agreed to the federation). But there is some doubt as to whether Stalin really wanted the federation to come about at all. The treaty of friendship was concluded in July of that year.<sup>50</sup> So both Moscow and Belgrade supported the communists there, but on an informal level. The Soviet Union provided aid to Albania, and Yugoslavia was used as an intermediary, and also offered to provide supplies.

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1998, p. 124.

*Diverging Interests: Soviet Yugoslav Relations 1943 - 1947*

The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia cooperated on many points. But in almost every case mentioned above, a dispute arose, and it was not only in these matters that there were disagreements. During the war, Tito and his partisans were directed to form a “national front;” a coalition with the other anti-fascist elements within the country to fight against the Nazi occupation forces. Tito refused. When the partisans rose up in revolt against German and Italian forces the Kremlin looked upon this as premature and irresponsible. Furthermore, the Soviet Union attempted to achieve a treaty of friendship with Tito’s arch nemesis, Draza Mihailovic. The Soviets were even supplying his royalist Cetnik forces while Tito was fighting them (and without even offering support to Tito). In early 1942 Moscow warned Tito to be careful not to mention anything about the postwar disposition of Yugoslavia for fear of alienating Britain and the United States.<sup>51</sup> At the end of November of that same year the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ), an organization that Tito had formed with other groups that would cooperate with him (obviously the Cetniks were not among them) adopted a resolution that forbade the King from returning to Yugoslavia until a referendum was held to determine whether the monarchy would continue. This development occurred during the Tehran Conference of the Big Three and Tito did not inform the Kremlin that this item would be on the AVNOJ agenda, even though he did inform them of the AVNOJ meeting, because he was afraid that the Soviets would order him to remove the referendum item from consideration. This prompted Stalin’s liaison

officer to the Comintern to comment, "The Boss is very angry. He says that this is a stab in the back for the Soviet Union and the Tehran decisions." Tito was already demonstrating his independence.<sup>52</sup> This is reflected in anecdote told by Milovan Djilas. In February 1943 the Partisans contacted the German forces in Yugoslavia to negotiate prisoner exchanges. When informed of this, Moscow's reply was critical. In a prophetic statement, Tito remarked, "Our first duty is to look after our own army and our own people."<sup>53</sup> In another example, in 1944 Belgrade complained about Soviet troops raping women in the Yugoslav territory that they were liberating primarily in order to protect the reputation of the Red Army.

Stalin himself took note of this matter, accusing the Yugoslavs—at one point tearfully—of showing insufficient respect for Soviet military sacrifices and for failing to sympathize when "a soldier who has crossed thousands of kilometers through blood and fire and death has fun with a woman or takes some trifle. The issue was not an insignificant one: the Red Army's behavior was a problem throughout the territories it occupied, and did much to alienate those who lived there. Stalin's only concern, though, seems to have been that the Yugoslavs were failing to meet the standards of deference and obedience he expected from allies; for their part, the Yugoslavs began to wonder, apparently for the first time, just whose interests international communism as directed from Moscow was supposed to serve."<sup>54</sup>

Ideologically, Stalin was breaking new ground for the communist movement because, while he had dealt with communist parties within sovereign states before (such as the Italian, French and American communist parties), he had never dealt with another sovereign *communist* state before--especially one that had liberated itself and established its own communist regime. This was an entirely new situation. Technically many of the

Soviet Republics were sovereign after the revolution: they had declared independence, signed treaties with other states, and been recognized by them, etc. But there was never really any doubt, at least not in the inner circles of the Bolsheviks, that these states would be reabsorbed. And they were. Even after they were integrated into the Soviet Union, these republics nominally kept their sovereignty, but again, it was form over substance. There was no doubt about who was really in charge.<sup>55</sup> Even within the communist governments in East European states, like Poland for instance, there were no illusions: Stalin directed, they acted. Their governments and their authority were established on the coattails of the Red Army. The situation with Yugoslavia was fundamentally different, but Stalin did not see the difference, or if he did, he wanted to eradicate that difference.

Yugoslavia, for the most part, liberated itself. The Red Army was not occupying the country. The Yugoslavs' own communist party, even though it was riddled with Stalinist agents, was its own entity; it was in charge in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav Army was the only one (other than the Czechoslovakian Army) that did not have Soviet officers in command or "advisory" positions.<sup>56</sup> The Yugoslavs themselves established communist rule in Yugoslavia, not the Red Army. That Stalin did not see this, and learn to adjust to this unique situation, can be attributed to his obsession with power and control. But it runs deeper than that—it goes down to the very essence of what the international communist movement was to be. Was it to be a unified movement directed from the center or was it to be a brotherhood of socialist states practicing national communism? Was this to be a Soviet empire, a hegemonic relationship, or were there to

be truly independent states?

These different ideological conceptions of the international communist movement are evident in the divergent interpretations of the role of the Cominform—the replacement for the Comintern. The Comintern was an instrument with which Stalin directed the foreign communist parties. By its very nature and very purpose (to direct parties to spread communism and world revolution), it was so offensive that the Western allies pressured Stalin to abolish it in 1943. As early as March 1946, as it was becoming more and more apparent that cooperation with the West would be a thing of the past, it was decided to resurrect the organization.<sup>57</sup> But Stalin had at least some notion that his new communist allies would also find it offensive since it would represent absolute direction from Moscow so he sought to make the project more palatable. He said that it would be solely an informational bureau, and the various communist parties would not be obligated to its decisions.\* This is what he was intimating when he said, “We will never reestablish the old style of the [Communist] International.” But he did not need to, because Comintern or no Comintern, he still directed the actions of the foreign communist parties, and he fully intended to do this with the Cominform. This did not change when the Comintern was abolished, and was not about to change with the

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\* That the communist parties were in fact subordinate to the Cominform (and, therefore, to Stalin) is evident in that one of the charges leveled against Yugoslavia in the Cominform's expulsion communiqué was that Yugoslavia failed to report to the Cominform. In most organizations, whoever you report to is who you are subordinate to. See *Resolution of the Information Bureau concerning the Situation in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, June 28, 1948*, in *The Soviet-Yugoslav Controversy, 1948 - 58: A Documentary Record*, Robert Bass and Elizabeth Marbury, eds. (New York: Prospect

establishment of the Cominform. It was just a change in the mechanics of how it was done, not a change in policy. He just wanted to soften up the national leaders to such an organization's reestablishment.<sup>58</sup>

Economically, cooperation did not last long between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, for the same reasons listed above: each wanted to define the relationship in different terms. The approach of the Soviet Union toward economic matters smacked of imperialism, and the Yugoslav approach was one of independence (or from the Soviet perspective: provincialism). The fact that the first five-year plan was created in Belgrade and that it called for the creation of a self-sufficient industrial economy reflects this feeling of independence on the part of the Yugoslavs; and Moscow's bitter reaction to this development belies their arrogance in dealing with their socialist brethren.<sup>59</sup> In the case of the joint enterprises agreed to on June 8, 1946 in the "Agreement on Economic Cooperation Between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia," only two of the eight enterprises got off the ground: the civil aviation enterprise and the Danube shipping company. All the others could not get past the negotiation stage because the Yugoslavs felt that the Soviets were trying to exploit them. In 1947 the Yugoslavs appealed directly to Stalin, and he retorted to Kardelj that no more joint enterprises would be created. Yugoslavia was happy to comply and signed an agreement to that effect on July 25, 1947.<sup>60</sup> By February of the following year, economic and political relations had so deteriorated that the USSR

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Books, 1959), p. 44.

refused to renew trade agreements.<sup>61</sup>

Within the purview of foreign policy there were disputes as well, and perhaps they were the most decisive ones in bringing about the split. There can be little doubt that Yugoslavia was the junior partner in this relationship, and Moscow issued instructions accordingly. Belgrade followed the instructions from Moscow, to be sure, but mainly when their interests and Soviet interests coincided. This pattern of behavior on the part of the Yugoslavs would persist after the split in their dealings with the West (to be discussed below). If there was a divergence of interests, then Belgrade was not flagrantly insubordinate, but they did take the decisions that they thought best served their interests and (therefore, in their opinion) the interests of the international socialist movement. The prominent examples of this in Soviet-Yugoslav relations are the aid program to the Greek Rebels, the confrontation with the West over Trieste, and the formation of the Balkan Federation.

Stalin ordered the cessation of support to the Greek communist rebels after the introduction of American military aid had turned the tide against the rebellion. That Stalin wanted to avoid provoking the United States is on record, but there is also evidence that seems to support the idea that the reason Stalin stopped the aid had less to do with fears of conflict with the United States than it did with pragmatism. Stalin figured that the goal would be obtained eventually. There was no need to spend good money and waste resources on a lost cause that would eventually be achieved when the circumstances were more favorable and the ends could be achieved more cheaply.<sup>62</sup>



Supplies stopped coming from the USSR, but not from Yugoslavia. Whether from a desire to expand or a desire to spread communism, Tito disregarded Stalin's orders.

As mentioned above, Tito expressed his gratitude for Soviet support over the Trieste issue during his May 1946 meeting with Stalin. This expression of gratitude would have been in the form of sarcasm if Tito had known that the very next month the Soviets were going to turn around and accept the French proposal to create a Free Territory of Trieste without even consulting the Yugoslavs. Furthermore, Tito's reaction might have gone beyond sarcasm if he had known that Stalin attempted to barter away Trieste and other Yugoslav territorial claims against Austria in return for more reparations from western Germany.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, one can imagine the betrayal Tito felt when the news of the acceptance of the French proposal came out and he had discussed this matter with Stalin himself only a few short weeks before!<sup>64</sup>

The formation of a Balkan Federation seemed to be in everyone's interests at the end of the Second World War. For Tito, it would have increased his power, and incorporated lost parts of Macedonian territory back into Yugoslavia. For the Bulgarian and Albanian leaders it would help provide stability to their shaky regimes, and Stalin was all for this. For all the Balkan leaders and for Stalin, it would help make the Balkans more secure against an increasingly threatening West. It would also have helped Bulgaria, Albania, and Yugoslavia in economic matters. And ideologically it appealed to the revolutionary spirits of Tito and Dimitrov (the former head of the Comintern) because it fit in with the concept of communist internationalism. "It would be the first stage in the

construction of a multinational Communist society.”<sup>65</sup> In November 1944, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia started planning accordingly,<sup>66</sup> and construction of an administration building was even initiated in Belgrade.<sup>67</sup> But after the US and Great Britain vetoed not only the federation but also the treaty of friendship, the idea was shelved for over a year. In April 1946 Petro Todorov, the Bulgarian representative to Yugoslavia raised the issue again. Tito refused the proposal, tactfully citing international difficulties (meaning he did not want to stir up trouble with the West over the matter\*), but actually he did not like the domestic arrangements of the Sofia regime and he told Stalin that the next month. It was still formally a monarchy, the party was weak, and the military was not fully under party control.<sup>68</sup>

Stalin’s calculations had changed again, however, and in May 1946, he informed Tito that a federation with Bulgaria must be formed following a signing of a treaty of friendship and cooperation.<sup>69</sup> Stalin’s calculations changed because he did not see the West as a threat to the consolidation of his grip on the Balkans anymore and Stalin hoped that this union would help bring stability to the Bulgarian regime.<sup>70</sup> Reluctantly Yugoslavia went ahead with the program, and in August 1947 a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance was announced.<sup>71</sup> But again, Stalin had somewhere reversed course (probably after the announcements of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan), and directed that the treaties and federation would have to be deferred

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\* Remember, this is the same year his forces shot down two American planes and he tells Todorov that he does not want to offend Western sensibilities! A further irony is that this is the same excuse Stalin gave Tito in obstructing the federation with Albania (see

until after a peace settlement had been finalized with Bulgaria. So Tito and Dimitrov had either chosen to ignore the directive or they were unable to keep up with all the changes. Either way, even if Tito had not meant to directly challenge Stalin's authority, there must have been at least some frustration over the confusing zigzag of policy changes.

In respect to Albania joining the federation, there is also room for confusion. How Tito felt about it was quite clear: he very much wanted to bring Albania into the federation. Stalin, on the other hand did not—probably because he did not want to see Tito gain more power.<sup>72</sup> In the same May 1946 meeting that Stalin directed Tito to sign a treaty of friendship and then form a federation with Dimitrov (the head of a still formally belligerent Bulgaria), Stalin directed Tito to go ahead with the treaty of friendship with Hoxha (also the head of a still formally belligerent Albania), but to defer a decision on the federation question with Albania.\* Stalin cited the same reasons that Tito gave Todorov the month before in refusing to negotiate a federation with Bulgaria—Stalin did not want to bring about a confrontation with the West.<sup>73</sup> Interestingly, on February 9<sup>th</sup> of that same year—two and a half months before—Stalin had declared that war with the West was inevitable, prompting a liberal Supreme Court Justice to characterize Stalin's speech as "The Declaration of World War III."<sup>74</sup>

Stalin was not against Tito aiding Hoxha; Albania needed the help. But he was

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below).

\* Tito's enthusiasm for uniting with Albania and his reluctance in dealing with Bulgaria is evident in the following fact: It took a little more than a month to conclude the treaty of friendship with Albania (July 1946), while it took over a year to conclude such a treaty with Bulgaria (August 1947). See Gibianskii, pp. 114, 115, 120, 125.

against the two federating. Albania became an arena of competition between the two. Yugoslavia was providing Albania with food, military and technical experts, and creating joint-stock companies.<sup>75</sup> In the first month of 1948, Tito told Hoxha that the Greeks were preparing to invade Albania and requested permission to move a division into Albania. Hoxha agreed. At least part of Tito's motivation was to move into Albania before the Soviets consolidated their influence in the country, and the Soviets seemed to recognize this, that is, after they found out. The Yugoslavs did not inform them of this planned move. Stalin took action.<sup>76</sup>

*The Split: 1948*

The planned move of two Yugoslav divisions into Albania in January 1948 and other Yugoslav and Bulgarian foreign policy "misunderstandings" were more than Stalin could stand. He summoned Bulgarian and Yugoslav delegates to Moscow for a dressing down in February. Tito, citing ill health, did not attend.<sup>77</sup> Stalin saw the Yugoslav move into Albania for what it was--a forestalling of Soviet influence in the country-- and said so "half-jokingly" during the meeting. The fact that this move was planned without approval or even consultation with Moscow made Stalin furious, and during his reprimand stated that "You didn't consult with us! We learn about your doings in the newspapers!" and further said that it was not merely a mistake that the Yugoslavs failed to consult with the Soviets but that it was their policy not to consult with them on matters

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of foreign affairs.<sup>78</sup>

Yugoslav appeals to the effect that the foreign policy misunderstandings were the result of conflicting and confusing guidance fell in nicely with Stalin's plans. The same month, February 1948, he forced them to sign a treaty on mutual consultation in matters of foreign policy. Formally this would address the Yugoslav concerns about confusion in foreign policies. But in Stalin's interpretation it would mean the end of Yugoslav independence in foreign policy matters.<sup>79</sup>

The following month the Soviets let their continued displeasure with the Yugoslavs be known in other ways. First, they refused to renew trade agreements with Yugoslavia. Then, on March 18th, the head of the Soviet military advisory group informed the Yugoslavs that he had been ordered to withdraw his advisors. The following day the Soviet Charge d'Affaires delivered a demarche to Tito saying that all civilian advisors would also be withdrawn citing a "'lack of hospitality and a lack of confidence' toward Soviet experts and Soviet representatives in Yugoslavia."<sup>80</sup> The crux of this dispute was that the Soviets in Yugoslavia were "acquiring information" through informal rather than formal channels, and although the Yugoslavs did not say so, they were also engaged in intrigues, blackmail and recruitment activities.<sup>81</sup> Obviously the Yugoslavs did not appreciate their patron conducting espionage and subversion against them. The Soviets, following a policy of "admit nothing, deny everything, and make counteraccusations," charged that the Yugoslavs were treating them like a bourgeois state, and that there should be transparency among socialist states (while still denying the

espionage). Evidently this transparency should only work one way in the Soviet view.

After Stalin's reprimand, the agreement on foreign policy consultation in February 1948, and the withdrawal of advisors there followed a flurry of letters that flew back and forth between the Central Committees in Moscow and Belgrade. From the Soviet side, one can see a definite escalation in the tone, accusations and rhetoric in the letters. From the Yugoslav side, the letters set about to maintain their innocence, demonstrate their loyalty, and prove that the Soviets were simply mistaken or misinformed in their allegations.

On March 27 the Soviets sent a letter addressed to Tito.\* This letter again addressed the controversy surrounding the "collection" role of the Soviet advisors, characterized the Yugoslav stance in this matter and others as anti-Soviet. The Soviets attacked Djilas by name, but not Tito. And, in a not so veiled threat the letter stated, "We think that the political career of Trotsky is quite instructive."<sup>82</sup> Tito gave a long response on April 13, that was conciliatory in nature, but he still did not abandon his principles, saying, "No matter how much each of us loves the land of Socialism, the USSR, he can, in no case, love his own country less..."<sup>83</sup>

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\* This was the last letter addressed to Tito. After this, all the rest would be addressed to the CC CPY. This may have been done for any or all of the three following reasons: (1) to demonstrate that Moscow no longer thought of Tito as the rightful leader of the CPY; (2) to try to induce the CPY to oust Tito; and, (3) to make sure that the CC CPY knew that this dispute was going on. Apparently the Soviets couldn't conceive that the CPY could know about the dispute with the "fatherland of socialism" and not do anything about it. Even at this stage the Soviets misjudged the loyalty of the CPY and thought that the CPY's first loyalty was to the Soviet Union.

This approach was not what the Soviets were looking for: it was not an admission of guilt and their next letter, besides including a lengthy reply to Tito's list of allegations contained in the letter of April 13th, raised the stakes. Once again, the specter of Trotsky was raised. The letter attacked Tito directly, but not the CC CPY, and accused him and Kardelj of a degree of arrogance that would lead the Yugoslavs to ruin. This was an obvious attempt to undermine Tito's support and incite the Communist Party of Yugoslavia to oust Tito. It further stated "...that maintaining this attitude means renouncing all friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and betraying the united socialist front of the Soviet Union and the people's democracies."<sup>84</sup> It was an outright threat of excommunication which, the letter stated, would be decided by a session of the Cominform. On May 17th Tito gave a short reply in which he continued to affirm his loyalty, and that he would prove this loyalty by deeds, but not in front of the Cominform.<sup>85</sup>

A final letter from the Soviets, dated May 22nd, listed the charges against the Yugoslavs, notified the CC CPY that the matter would be brought up in the forum of the Cominform at the end of June, and again tried to separate Tito from his support.<sup>86</sup>

On June 28, 1948 the Cominform voted to expel Yugoslavia from the brotherhood of socialist nations.\* Afterwards Stalin embarked on a campaign to remove Tito that

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\* The date, June 28, (St. Vitus' Day) is significant in Serbian history. On that date in 1389 the Serbs were defeated by the Turks in Kosovo. On that date in 1914 Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serb nationalist. I was unable to determine if the Cominform chose that date in order to give St. Vitus' Day even more notoriety, but it would seem to be more than a coincidence. See John C. Campbell, Tito's

included all measures short of war: rhetoric, border disputes, violations, and troop build-ups, economic isolation, purges of “Titoists” from other East European states, and even plans to assassinate Tito. On Yugoslavia’s part, the gravity of the situation took a while to sink in. At the Fifth Congress of the CPY the month following the expulsion, the Yugoslavs were still hoping for a reconciliation, “Tito concluded his speech with a ringing ‘Long Live Stalin,’” to which the party members chanted in reply, “Stalin—Tito—Party!”<sup>87</sup>

#### *Testing of Balance of Threat Hypotheses*

The hypotheses generated by balance of threat theory fare very well in this case.

Looking at the “big picture” of the entire states system during this time period, a decent argument could be made that the central hypothesis (that states ally to balance against threats rather than against power alone) of balance of threat theory holds up well here. First of all, World War II could be interpreted as the Grand Alliance states balancing against the threat presented by the Axis, or that Nazi Germany exhibited balancing against the threat that the rise in Soviet power posed. Either way you look at it, it cannot be said that either side balanced against sheer power alone, but against the perception that the power was threatening. If we discount the perception of threat, after the war we should have seen the entire world balancing against the might of the United

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Separate Road: America and Yugoslavia in World Politics. (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 12.



States. This did not occur. Both sides began to perceive each other as more and more of a threat, with the Cold War as a result. This also affirms the prediction concerning the disintegration of alliances at the conclusion of wars.

But I am reluctant to make the claim that the Second World War or that the origins of the Cold War can be explained in terms of balance of threat theory, for several reasons. Probably the most important reason for this is that Walt himself refuses to explain the Cold War in such terms. He maintains that the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union was in its essence two superpowers balancing against one another. He does, however, assert that the alliance choices of the lesser powers can be explained by examining the threats that they faced.<sup>88</sup> Secondly, I will not claim that balance of threat theory explains the Cold War because making a determination between the central hypothesis and the threat factor concerning aggregate power (i.e. the greater a state's total resources, the greater potential threat it can pose to others) is extremely difficult to make and beyond the scope of this work. The scope of this work is more focused than trying to apply balance of threat theory to explain these phenomena. These are questions that would take several books and several more years of research to try to broach. Much analysis would be needed to attempt to isolate the variables of power and threat perception. This is a subject that needs to be addressed if balance of threat theory is to gain wider acceptance, and further research is needed because, even if the theory does not apply in explaining the Cold War, it will help delineate the limits of the theory. For our purposes, as far as Yugoslavia is concerned, this hypothesis is applicable during

World War II and in 1948 when Yugoslavia began to see Soviet imperialism as a threat. In the intervening period Yugoslavia faced very few threats to her security, and the theory does not apply.

During World War II Yugoslavia faced the threat of Axis forces (in fact, she was occupied). Britain's support of Tito's partisans against their common enemy helps make the case for this theory, as does Stalin's reluctance in helping the partisans. He did not want to endanger the Grand Alliance by giving the perception that he planned to make the Balkans a part of a postwar Communist camp. For Stalin, the maintenance of the Grand Alliance against the Nazi threat outweighed any amount of hit-and-run ambushes that Tito and his fighters could pull off. It was only after Britain started aiding Tito that Stalin could feel reassured that any aid given to the partisans would not be perceived as threatening by the Western Allies, and therefore endanger the alliance.<sup>89</sup>

Most convincingly, based on power alone, Yugoslavia should have stayed within the Soviet camp in order to balance against the United States. It did not. Once the repeated encroachments on Yugoslav sovereignty convinced that state's leadership that the Soviet Union posed a threat, the split occurred. I believe this is also related to the threat factors regarding geographic proximity and offensive capabilities. Quickly put, the Soviet Union was much closer, and its army much more menacing, than the United States and its armed forces.

The strength of the Red Army was not absolute, however, and this plays into Walt's next prediction that stronger states will tend to balance against threats rather than

bandwagon (which weaker states will tend to do). The weakness of the other Eastern European states meant that they had little choice but to submit to the Soviet Union's policies and interference. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, could stand up to the Soviet Union for several reasons. First, it had a strong army and highly defensible terrain. This would make a Soviet intervention costly. Second, the Communist regime came to power mostly on its own and was not dependent on the Red Army to stay in power. As Stalin himself said, "...whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise." The Red Army could not reach to Belgrade, and this was threatening to Stalin. "He felt instinctively that the creation of revolutionary centers outside of Moscow could endanger its supremacy in world Communism, and of course that is what actually happened."<sup>90</sup> The Yugoslav regime enjoyed a high degree of domestic legitimacy that made the split possible, even if it did go against Communist ideology.

The hypothesis regarding ideology has mixed results, but the bottom line is that ideology played a limited role in alliance choices during this time period.\* Ideology was most influential during the time period when Yugoslavia was in the Soviet camp. The split, however, demonstrates that ideology was soundly subordinated to perceived threats in this case.

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\* Ironically, Walt's hypotheses are open to criticism here because he generated them in a manner which he thought would forestall criticism. In *Origins of Alliances*, Walt tested his theory against the Cold War alignments in the Middle East. In this clever fashion he hoped to preempt criticism that his theory was "Eurocentric." (pp. 11 – 12) However, some of his historically based hypotheses, especially those concerning ideology, do not

During World War II Britain supported Tito's Communist partisans even while the Royal Yugoslav government was in exile in London because the partisans were doing more fighting than the royalist forces under Mihailovich. The Soviet Union supported Mihailovich to the detriment of Tito because they did not want to endanger the Grand Alliance. After the war ideology was a significant bond between the USSR and Yugoslavia, but it was not the most significant factor as evidenced by the split in 1948. This affirms Walt's primary hypothesis on ideology; that it is less significant than balancing. It also provides support for the hypothesis that centralized and hierarchical movements are subject to rupture. This case also refutes the prediction that similar states will align, further reducing the significance of the role that ideology plays.

Walt's hypothesis concerning foreign aid also fares well. Britain's support of Tito during the war provided them with little leverage over Tito and his policies. What little support the Soviet Union provided also had little effect. Probably more significant was not the Soviet support, but the opposite-- the Soviet attempts at exploitation—in having an effect on Yugoslavia's choices. The same can be said about Soviet political penetration into Yugoslavia. Its' effect was the exact opposite of what the Soviet leadership had hoped to accomplish. Instead of tightening Moscow's grip on Belgrade the infiltration, espionage, recruitment and subversion conducted by Stalinist agents within the Communist Party of Yugoslavia helped to drive Tito out of the Communist camp.

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apply in this case. Again, this is another reason why testing has value.

**Balance of Threat Theory**  
**Hypotheses, Predictions and Outcomes**  
**1943 - 1948**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Prediction</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
States balance against threats	States that represent a threat will provoke an alliance	--Grand Alliance against Axis --East and West perceive each other as threats --Yugo-Soviet split	Affirmed
	Stronger states will balance, weaker will bandwagon	SFRY able to break with USSR, satellites cannot	Affirmed
	Wartime alliances will disintegrate	Grand Alliance disintegrates	Affirmed
Ideology subordinate to threat in alliance choices	States will create alliances for security, not for ideological reasons	Yugo-Soviet split	Affirmed
	Similar states will ally (provided security condition is met)	SFRY initially allied with USSR, then split when USSR perceived as threat	Affirmed
	Alliances in Communist movement will be fragile	Yugo-Soviet split	Affirmed
Aid and penetration are no causes for alignment	States that are internally and externally secure will seek ideological alliances	--SFRY secure internally, ideological alliance not necessary --SFRY threatened by USSR, breaks ideological alliance	Affirmed
	Aid and penetration will not determine alignment	UK and USSR aid to SFRY did not determine alliance	Affirmed
	Donor will have leverage through aid only when recipient threatened	UK and USSR little leverage over SFRY	Affirmed
	Decentralized states will have trouble using aid for leverage	Decision-making centralized in wartime UK	Not assessed
	Penetration harder against closed societies	SFRY able to restrict USSR penetration	Affirmed
	Penetration will be seen as threat if intentions are not limited	SFRY feels threatened by USSR	Affirmed

Table 2

## 1948 - 1952

The period after the split provides us with the highest value on our causal variable: threat. This is the time when Yugoslavia faced the most danger from the Soviet Union and should provide us with significant insight into the viability of balance of threat theory.

### *General Situation*

The deterioration of relations between East and West continued. As a counter to the West's announcement of currency reforms in Western Germany, Stalin implemented the first Berlin Blockade shortly before the Yugoslav expulsion from the Cominform. The Western Allies were able to overcome the blockade by airlift. The Berlin Blockade provided the final impetus for the United States to join the first peacetime entangling alliance in its history with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949.<sup>91</sup> Also in that year, separate East and West German governments were formed, giving the postwar division of Europe a more permanent air.<sup>92</sup> The American policy of containment began to take on a more military characteristic. The peacetime draft was reinstated in the summer of 1948, and National Security Council memorandum 68, issued in the spring of 1950, called for a tripling of the defense budget.<sup>93</sup> Such an outlay of money on defense was impossible at the time because of domestic politics, but was sorely needed: there were only 100,000 American troops in Europe to face the massive Red Army, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb in August 1949, and the Communists achieved a

victory in the world's populous nation (China) in October of that year.<sup>94</sup> An imbalance was growing, but domestic support for increased defense spending was nonexistent. But then the Communist world gave the Truman administration the exact reason it needed to request the funds for a buildup. On 25 June 1950 Communist North Korea invaded South Korea. No one could say for certain that this was not a precursor to a more general Communist offensive.

### *Soviet Reactions*

After the Cominform expelled Yugoslavia from its rolls, Stalin told Nikita Khrushchev, "I will shake my little finger, and there will be no more Tito. He will fall."<sup>95</sup> Stalin was shaking his finger like mad. He embarked on a campaign that included all measures short of outright invasion (and the evidence suggests that he even considered that) to rid himself of Tito.<sup>96</sup> The most dangerous (to Tito personally) of these measures were plans to assassinate the Yugoslav leader by using an agent who had been involved in the assassination of Trotsky.<sup>97</sup> Evidently the references to Trotsky in the letters from the Soviet Central Committee were not mere bluff. In September and October 1948, the Soviet Union and all of its satellites cancelled the treaties of friendship and cooperation with Yugoslavia.<sup>98</sup> There was also an intense propaganda campaign launched against the Yugoslav leadership. Every and any insult that could be hurled against the "revisionist," "Fascist," "Tito clique" was. Accusations of revisionism, disparaging remarks about the Yugoslavian five-year plan and self management program, and even a downplaying, if a not complete rewriting of the history of the role the

partisans played in the liberation of Yugoslavia were common elements of the barrage of rhetoric that made up this ideological war. Included in this were direct appeals to the Yugoslav people to overthrow their leadership.<sup>99</sup>

To help them out, anti-Tito Yugoslavs were organized in the bordering states. A series of border incidents were staged. The ethnic shatterbelt of the Balkans provided ample opportunity to stir up old resentments, rivalries and hatreds, and Yugoslavia shared borders with Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rumania who could all make territorial demands against Yugoslavia. Stalin even turned the Communist Greek rebels against their Yugoslav benefactors, even though he had forsaken them. All these states could find plenty of reason to dispute this or that section of their border with Yugoslavia, or even an entire republic of Yugoslavia, such as Macedonia.<sup>100</sup> And, as the plots to overthrow or assassinate Tito continued to fail to come to fruition, and the realization dawned on Stalin that he had underestimated the resilience of the nationalism that kept Tito in power, the militaries of the states bordering Yugoslavia were drastically increased in size, and plans were completed for the invasion of Yugoslavia.<sup>101</sup>

The increases in satellite armies surrounding Yugoslavia was dramatic, and the mobilization coincided with planning for an invasion. This must have been extremely alarming for Tito. The following numbers showing the increases in ground strength of three of Yugoslavia's neighbors from August 1950 to February 1951:<sup>102</sup>

Rumania, 186,000 → 323,000;

Bulgaria, 94,000 → 286,000;



Hungary, 38,500 → 175,000.

This dramatic increase (over 400% in the case of Hungary) shows that an invasion was seriously being considered; the planning for the invasion, which would have included participation by all of the satellite states, was completed in the summer of 1951. The details of the invasion plans were finalized during war games conducted in January 1951.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, in 1957, when relations had improved between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Marshal Zhukov remarked to Tito during a visit to Belgrade, “Did you know, Comrade, what we wanted to do to you in 1951?”<sup>104</sup> It seems that the decisive American reaction to the North Korean invasion of South Korea spared Yugoslavia from the same fate.<sup>105</sup>

Along with this, the socialist countries, who had previously accounted for roughly fifty percent of Yugoslavia’s foreign trade, imposed an economic blockade. Credits, aid, supplies, technology, capital goods and fuel were cut off just as Yugoslavia was embarking on an industrialization campaign.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, “Yugoslavia was excluded from the new Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon).”<sup>107</sup> Also as a reaction to the split, Stalin launched a series of purges in Eastern Europe to remove other national communists (Titoists) that might be lurking about. Hardly a East European state was left untouched, with some high ranking official or other being removed because he was not sufficiently subservient to Moscow.\* The threat against Tito was very real and

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\* The following is a short list of the anti-Titoist purges that were carried out in response to the rift with Yugoslavia: Rumania, June 1948, Minister of Justice Lucretiu Patrascanu removed; Bulgaria, March 1949, Politburo member and Deputy Prime Minister Traicho

very serious.

*Yugoslav reactions*

While Soviet actions after the split were undoubtedly hostile and remained so for the next five years, Yugoslavia remained hopeful for a reconciliation for some time after the split. This reflects their commitment to ideology; they could not conceive of themselves as being outside of the communist movement, especially since they were such good communists, and they thought that the entire situation was just a misunderstanding that would soon be corrected. Their actions immediately following the split reflect this.

The first time that the Western powers were able to make any type of observations about the legitimacy and depth of the split was at the Danube Conference in August of 1948. At this conference the Yugoslavs continued to side with the Soviet bloc on every matter. They went out of their way to demonstrate their complete loyalty to Moscow. However, the Western delegates also noticed that the other East Europeans and Soviets completely ignored the Yugoslavs. The split was real, but for now the Yugoslavs were doing everything they could to try and reconcile with the other socialist countries.<sup>108</sup> As the hostility continued, and even intensified, the Yugoslavs began to realize that there would be no reconciliation; at least, they thought, while Stalin was alive.

And, so while Tito's legitimacy made it possible for him to break with Moscow

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Kostov removed and executed; Albania, June 1949 Koci Dzhodze executed; Hungary, former Minister of Interior and then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laszlo Rajk executed in September 1949; Poland, September 1948, General Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka removed, and in Czechoslovakia numerous officials were purged throughout 1949 and the spring of 1950. Z. A. B. Zeman, The Making and Breaking of Communist Europe,

and survive at home politically, his defiance in the face of Moscow also enhanced his prestige domestically. For, although the Yugoslav leadership was composed of good Communists, it was also composed of good nationalists who had fought a bitter and often nasty partisan war against their fascist occupiers to achieve self-liberation.<sup>109</sup>

The pressure on Yugoslavia continued to mount, and eventually she turned toward the West. At first the impetus was economic, then military. Struggling with the economic blockade, reconstruction from the war, and industrialization, the Yugoslavs started dealing with the West economically. In December 1948, the Yugoslavs agreed to a short-term trade agreement with the British that had been stalled in negotiations for over two years. They also agreed to compensate Britain for British holdings in Yugoslavia that had been nationalized, and Britain in turn agreed to release Yugoslav banking accounts in Great Britain which had been frozen since the Yugoslav capitulation to the Germans.<sup>110</sup> In August 1949 a trade agreement was signed with Italy, even though the disposition of Trieste was still unsettled and a thorny issue for both sides. Trade agreements with the United States soon followed. Soon after Yugoslavia received a \$20 million loan from the Export-Import bank and credits from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and again from the Export-Import bank. The Yugoslavs initiated all of these economic moves.<sup>111</sup>

The Yugoslav leadership was reluctant to turn to the West for help for fear that they would be pressured into changing their policies, and because of the inherent distaste

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(Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 245 – 250.

they held for capitalist nations. But, aware of his isolated position in the world, Tito did not rule out turning to the West for assistance and even opened back channel contacts with the West in a matter of weeks after the Cominform resolution.<sup>112</sup> A severe drought in the summer of 1950 overcame this reluctance, and now the Yugoslavs were not only asking for loans and credits, but also for grants and aid. The United States Congress passed legislation to grant Yugoslavia \$50 million worth of emergency food aid to help alleviate the effects of the drought.<sup>113</sup> This program of direct aid would continue for several years.

The opening of the Korean War was just as alarming for Yugoslavia as it was for the United States. It was this event, coupled with the military build-up of the surrounding satellite states, that propelled Yugoslavia to turn to the West for military assistance because she began to wonder if she was to be next. On 14 November 1951 a military assistance agreement was signed in Washington that provided tanks, artillery, mortars, trucks, fighters and training to the Yugoslavs.<sup>114</sup> Some of this equipment can still be seen today in the inventories of the various successor republics.

The first time that the Yugoslavs approached the West for arms was at the end of October 1950 when Tito made a request to the French ambassador. The following January the Yugoslavs made a request to the British government, and a few days later also approached the United States. Initially, all these requests were made covertly for fear of provoking the Soviet Union. Only when the situation seemed to become extremely grave in the first half of 1951 did information about the military assistance leak

out in order to act as a deterrent against a Soviet invasion. A formal announcement of the request to the American government was later made in order to satisfy provisions of the Mutual Defense Assistance Program. Talks began between the Yugoslavs and the American military about the scope of the aid program on the one hand, and the operational commanders in NATO on the other for the purpose of coordinating planning for defensive operations in the event of an outbreak of general war in Europe. The agreement signed on 14 November was the result of the bilateral talks with the United States. As a result of this agreement, \$156,360,000 worth of equipment was budgeted for Yugoslavia in Fiscal Year 1952 (which started on 1 October 1951), and the Yugoslavs agreed to accept a Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) into their country to oversee the distribution and disposition of the equipment.<sup>115</sup> The talks with NATO will be discussed below.

For about a year after the expulsion, Yugoslavia continued to support the rebels in Greece. But the Greek rebels, at Stalin's behest, supported the Cominform's economic blockade and the antagonism between the rebels and their Yugoslav patrons increased. It was for this reason, therefore, that Tito cut off aid, and closed the border to the rebels, in July 1949, and not because of British attempts to link Yugoslav support of the rebels to trade credits or American attempts at linkage of this matter to support Yugoslavia's campaign to gain a seat in the United Nations Security Council.<sup>116</sup> This opened the way to an improvement in Greek-Yugoslav relations, securing Yugoslavia's flank so she could concentrate on the main task of facing the Soviet-led threat. It also opened the way

to a treaty of friendship and cooperation between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey, signed in Ankara on 28 February 1953. By linking itself militarily to two NATO members, without actually joining NATO, Yugoslavia was getting the best of both worlds. She could enjoy the deterrence that the North Atlantic Alliance afforded, yet still claim that she was not a member of the bourgeois clique, and maintain her army under her command. The next year this military agreement was transformed into a full-fledged military alliance with the signing of the Bled Pact. The military plans of this alliance were coordinated with NATO plans. These moves were all encouraged by Washington.<sup>117</sup>

#### *Western reactions*

The first reaction most American policy-makers had toward the split was one of shock and disbelief. This ran completely counter to the lens through which they viewed the world and the Communist movement. The supposedly Communist monolith had split apart. There had been a few indications that there were disagreements between Belgrade and Moscow, but few recognized them because of their world-view on monolithic Communism.\* Indeed, the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency saw this as an opportunity to liberate Yugoslavia from the grasp of Communism, and even infiltrated

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\* One of the signs, missed by most Western observers, that there were disagreements between the Soviets and Yugoslavs, was a dispute over the site for the August 1948 Danube Conference. The Soviets suggested to the Western Allies that the conference should be moved from Belgrade to some other Danube capital because the Yugoslav capital was not adequate for hosting the conference. The Yugoslavs contradicted this suggestion and made it clear that they were prepared to host the conference. Lane, p. 117.

former Serb Cetniks into the country to help initiate the coup. Unfortunately for the agents, Yugoslav authorities quickly sniffed this ill-conceived plot out. The British quite correctly labeled this attempt as “inconceivably stupid,” and “idiotic American behaviour.”<sup>118</sup>

This attempted ouster was a result of the newly formed CIA not being read into the plans of both the British and the American governments. Both, for the most part, quickly realized two things. First, liberation was not an option. As the American ambassador, Cavendish Cannon wrote in a telegram to the State Department following this debacle, “In Yugoslavia there are not three choices, but two: Tito or a Moscow tool.”<sup>119</sup> And since no one (other than Stalin) wanted the Moscow tool, there remained only one choice left. Now the question was how best to take advantage of the split. This leads us to the second conclusion of Western policy-makers: that, if genuine, the split presented a wonderful opportunity for exploitation. With a split in the heretofore-perceived Communist monolith, the West could now use Yugoslavia as an example for the other East European satellites to follow and drive a wedge between Moscow and the satellites. But in order to be successful, this strategy had to follow certain constraints. Stated broadly, Yugoslavia had to succeed as a genuine Communist state outside of the Soviet orbit. There are three elements to this constraint. Yugoslavia had to be successful. It could not fail if it was to be a shining example to the other Eastern European states that there was a viable alternative to Soviet domination. In this sense, Yugoslavia had to become economically sound, and this explains the fairly quick and

considerable support—\$358 million from the U.S. alone from 1949 – 1955—Yugoslavia received from the West once it asked for it, which leads us to the next point.<sup>120</sup>

Yugoslavia could not be seen as a puppet to the West if she was going to attract other socialist states away from the Moscow pole. Yugoslavia also could not allow herself to be seen as a stooge of the West for domestic political reasons. After all, the split with the Cominform had come about as a result of Tito being unwilling to subordinate his interests to the Soviet Union. He surely could not cave into the capitalists when he was unwilling to do so with his socialist comrades. Therefore the United States was limited in how far it could go in trying to impose its will on Yugoslavia without damaging the relationship. Yugoslavia would use this to its advantage. And finally, Yugoslavia had to remain outside of the Soviet camp. Again, too much pressure to get Yugoslavia to change its policies could result in driving her back towards the Soviets.

This does not mean that the West did not try to influence Yugoslavia. It did. But the attempts were only successful when Western interests coincided with Yugoslav interests. Otherwise the Yugoslavs were quite adept at claiming that they could not side with the Americans on this issue or that because if they did it would compromise their standing as a socialist state and therefore reduce their influence and value in Eastern Europe. Examples of this including the cessation of aid and support to the Greek Communist rebels (mentioned above), and the votes in the United Nations Security Council at the beginning of the Korean War.

In the fall of 1949 Yugoslavia informed the United States that she wanted to stand



for election by the General Assembly for the East European rotating seat in the UNSC. Yugoslavia's aim in this was to get support in the world court of public opinion in its struggles with the Soviet Union and to have a place where it could rapidly and loudly voice itself to a wide audience should the threat of Soviet invasion be realized.<sup>121</sup>

Although there was nothing in the UN Charter which stated this seat had to go to an East European state, by gentlemen's agreement this seat had been reserved for East European states previously. Of course, in reality this meant that it was reserved for a Soviet satellite that dutifully touted the party line. The United States did not want to antagonize the Soviet Union over this matter, but the US must have gotten at least a little pleasure over the discomfort the Soviets felt in the Yugoslavian candidacy. At any rate, the United States decided to support Yugoslavia for the seat mainly because it did not want anyone to get the impression that America was backing down after the Soviet Union had just exploded its first atomic bomb. While all this was going on, the American UN delegation informed their Yugoslav counterparts that, although not required for US support to the UNSC seat, the United States would appreciate it if the Yugoslavs ceased aiding the Greek rebels. The Yugoslavs, knowing that this was already in the works, if not already accomplished, readily agreed. Yugoslavia was elected to the seat on 20 October 1949 over the Soviet nominee, Czechoslovakia.<sup>122</sup> But, much to the United States' disappointment, Yugoslavia failed to side decisively with the United States in the Security Council when the Korean War broke out. Although both the United States and Yugoslavia took the invasion of South Korea as a foreboding of possible aggressive

action against the Balkan state, and therefore, one could expect that Yugoslavia would back UN action to defend South Korea, Yugoslavia did not do so because she did not want to antagonize the Soviet Union and give it any excuse to launch an attack.

As noted above, the fear of a seemingly impending attack drove the Yugoslavs to ask for military aid from the West. That same fear also drove the West to grant that aid, and to form a fairly close relationship with Yugoslavia militarily for several reasons. First, it was thought unlikely that a Soviet-led invasion of Yugoslavia would remain a localized conflict. There was the very real danger of such an action expanding to a general war. For this reason, the West undertook several actions to create a deterrent. The first was the military aid (already discussed), the second was joint planning to increase readiness and integration that would make the Soviets think twice before launching an invasion (to be discussed below), and the third was diplomatic in nature. Both the British and the Americans issued statements (for the first time in January 1949, and reiterated again in February 1951) that left open the exact nature of what the British and American reactions would be to an invasion, thus leaving open the possibility of direct military involvement. Up until this time, the policy of both governments had been that they would only provide indirect support and materiel in the event of an outbreak of war. Now they were not only supplying the Yugoslavs before a war started, but were also leaving open the question of what they would do if the Soviets did invade. The Soviets, apparently, were convinced not only by these statements, but also by the strong American response in Korea.<sup>123</sup>

The second reason why there was a tightening of military relations between Yugoslavia and the West is because of the strategic value of Yugoslavia. This is closely related to the military planning and coordination between the two mentioned above, but in this sense I do not have in mind the deterrent value of the planning, but the general defense of Western Europe and the role that Yugoslavia could play in it. Before the closer relations between NATO and Yugoslavia it could not be assumed that Yugoslavia would side with the West in a general European war with the Soviet bloc. Indeed, before the Yugoslav-Soviet split it could only be assumed that Yugoslavia would be hostile. With the split the assumption was made that Yugoslavia would be neutral. The progressively hostile relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union now allowed for the assumption for planning purposes that Yugoslavia would be drawn into the general war on the side of the North Atlantic Alliance. This change dramatically affected NATO's planning for a war, and made the conditions for defending Western Europe much more favorable for the Western Alliance.

NATO's plans for the defense of Europe were based on the assumption of Yugoslavia's neutrality forecasted the loss of Austria early in the war and little chance for maintaining a hold on Italy and Greece. Because of this, NATO plans called for the withdrawal of Western troops from Austria at the outset of a conflict to prevent their capture. This withdrawal would open up Northern Italy to invasion, and there were simply not enough forces available to hold the rest of Italy for very long after that. Greece, lying on the periphery of NATO's area of operations would be difficult to

support and impossible to defend. This situation changed completely when Tito announced in February 1951 that Yugoslavia would fight on the side of the NATO alliance if the Soviet Union launched an invasion of Western Europe.<sup>124</sup>

Not only did this add Yugoslavia's 33 divisions to the Western Alliance's ledger, but this development also greatly simplified the problem of defending Western Europe. Austria no longer had to be written off as an immediate loss and could now be defended. This in turn made it possible to retain Italy. And Yugoslavia further provided a link to Greece on NATO's southern flank that did not make that country's loss a foregone conclusion anymore. This in turn helped ease the burdens of planning for the defense of Turkey and the Middle East. It was in this light that the US-sanctioned maneuvers for closer military relations between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey (the Ankara and Bled Pacts) were initiated. This truly provided a great opportunity for the West, and the Yugoslav-American military assistance agreement reflected NATO's defense plans. Yugoslavia agreed to defend the Ljubljana Gap that opened onto the North Italian plains with twelve divisions, and the United States agreed to outfit those divisions. The MAAG was to oversee the distribution of equipment to those units.<sup>125</sup>

#### *Testing of balance of threat hypotheses*

Again, balance of threat theory predicts accurately the events during this time period. Yugoslavia, enduring a serious and credible threat of attack from the Soviet

Union and its satellites, turned to the West for assistance. Ideology played little role. The West, also balancing against the Soviet Union, willingly accepted Yugoslavia as a *de facto* ally. Because of Yugoslavia's unique role and place, and because of some expert diplomatic moves on her part, Yugoslavia did not allow the West to gain leverage over her despite all the aid that she received. Now some specific observations about the hypotheses and how they relate to this time period.

The Soviet Union and its satellites presented the biggest threat toward Yugoslavia by far, and this, the central hypothesis of balance of threat theory, is *the* driving force behind Yugoslav policy and alignment choices during this period. The amount of resources—the aggregate power—of the Soviet Union or the United States really did not have much effect on Yugoslav foreign policy, inasmuch as, if it did, Yugoslavia would have balanced against the United States. Again, for our purposes, the fact that there was a large relative disparity between Yugoslavia and either the Soviet Union or the United States is enough for us to grasp the choices that Yugoslavia faced. In explaining Yugoslavia's balancing behavior, it is not that important for us to determine exactly what the balance was between the United States and the Soviet Union. Other factors, especially the large offensive capability of the nearby Soviet bloc (as opposed to the distant American military strength) and the aggressive intentions of the Soviets (in contrast to the friendly gestures of the West), make this point rather moot, and more than make up any advantage the United States enjoyed in aggregate power.

Once again in this time period we see Yugoslavia enjoying a defensive advantage

and choosing to balance against the Soviet threat. We should not make too much of this phenomenon, however; it is spurious. Yugoslavia did not balance against the Soviet threat because she had thirty-plus divisions or her terrain would allow her to make an invasion very costly to the Soviets. She balanced simply because she had no other choice. Tito and his entourage could not go back to the Soviet side and expect to survive. Their life expectancy would have been extremely short if they had chosen to do so. The fact that the West was willing (even enthusiastic) to take them onto their side made this choice easier. It also probably prevented an invasion once Stalin realized that his attempts at subversion and assassination were not going to be successful in getting rid of Tito and bringing Yugoslavia back into the Soviet fold.

So again we see that ideology had little effect on alignment choices for either the Yugoslavs or the Americans. This was a marriage of convenience, and again demonstrates the fragility of centralized ideologies, especially when dealing with a regime that enjoys a high level of legitimacy. It also demonstrates how little effect ideology has when the threat is strong enough and a state feels insecure. This time period continues to show that like states do not necessarily stick together as Walt predicts, but again, this is closely related to the fragile nature of the international Communist movement.

It is this time period that is the richest for us to observe the effects of foreign aid, because we have a large contrast between this period when foreign aid starts and the time period before when Yugoslavia received little outside aid; and because we should also be

able to make some observations on how foreign aid combines with an increase of threat to provide the donor state leverage over the recipient. I say “we *should* be able to” make these observations. Unfortunately, however, this is a case in which it would be dangerous to generalize from in regard to making observations on the effect of foreign aid on alignment choices because of the unique situation Yugoslavia found herself in. Having split with the Soviet bloc because the leader of that bloc could not respect her sovereignty and independence, Yugoslavia was able to play that card well in order to keep the West from trying to infringe on Yugoslav independence. The West (the United States and Great Britain) was sensitive to this aspect of their relationship with Yugoslavia, and they were careful not to infringe on Yugoslav independence (even to the point of tolerating some vicious attacks in the Yugoslav press). Indeed, it was this independence that made Yugoslavia so valuable to Western calculations in using Yugoslavia as an example to attract other East European states out of the Soviet orbit.

During this time period observations concerning political penetration cannot be confidently made because there was little penetration achieved. In this sense, only two observations can be made. First, that closed societies, such as Yugoslavia’s, are hard to penetrate. Second, that Tito appreciated the effects that penetration was possible of achieving, and therefore sought to limit the size of the MAAG. But then again, this could be just ordinary xenophobia or paranoia at work that seems to occur so often in Communist regimes.

**Balance of Threat Theory**  
**Hypotheses, Predictions and Outcomes**  
**1948 - 1952**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Prediction</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
States balance against threats	States that represent a threat will provoke an alliance	US and SFRY align against USSR	Affirmed
	Stronger states will balance, weaker will bandwagon	SFRY able to hold out against USSR, satellites cannot	Affirmed
	Wartime alliances will disintegrate	Not assessed	Not assessed
Ideology subordinate to threat in alliance choices	States will create alliances for security, not for ideological reasons	US and SFRY align against USSR	Affirmed
	Similar states will ally (provided security condition is met)	SFRY perceives USSR as threat	Affirmed
	Alliances in Communist movement will be fragile	Yugo-Soviet split continues	Affirmed
	States that are internally and externally secure will seek ideological alliances	--SFRY secure internally, ideological alliance not necessary --SFRY threatened by USSR, aligns with democracies	Affirmed
Aid and penetration are no causes for alignment	Aid and penetration will not determine alignment	Western aid to SFRY did not determine alliance	Affirmed
	Donor will have leverage through aid only when recipient threatened	UK and US little leverage over SFRY even when threatened	Affirmed
	Decentralized states will have trouble using aid for leverage	No problems for West at this stage	Disproved
	Penetration harder against closed societies	SFRY able to restrict US penetration	Affirmed
	Penetration will be seen as threat if intentions are not limited	US not even given chance to gain significant penetration	Affirmed

Table 3



## 1953 – 1964

### *General Situation*

In 1953 there was a changing of the guard in leadership of both of the superpowers. Dwight David Eisenhower won the presidency in the United States based, in part, on his tough anti-Communist stance and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, promoted the policy of rollback—that is, the rolling back of Communism and the liberation of the “enslaved” states of Eastern Europe. Despite all the tough rhetoric, there was little change in American foreign policy. Policy makers realized that there could be no roll back without starting the Third World War. If they did not realize this, then they would soon learn this lesson in 1956 when the opportunity for liberating at least one East European state presented itself.

On the Soviet side, Josef Stalin died on 5 March 1953. Although no clear successor immediately came to the fore, the effect on Soviet policy, domestic and foreign, was soon felt. Stalinism, in all its intensity and all of its evil was at an end. The effect must have been almost palpable, and a certain sense of relief was felt in the Eastern bloc. Many thought that things must change, and, in fact, it did not take East German workers long to rise up. The new Soviet collective leadership was not that eager to make changes, however, and these revolts were soon suppressed. A limited thawing of the Cold War followed, as symbolized by the Korean armistice, but the competition between the two superpowers continued.

*Soviet-Yugoslav Relations*

Almost immediately after Stalin's death the Soviets took measures to reduce the hostility between Yugoslavia and the Soviet bloc. The anti-Tito propaganda that had been almost continuous since the summer of 1948 subsided. Border incidents decreased dramatically, and that summer the Soviets proposed an exchange of ambassadors (diplomatic relations were not severed when the split occurred, but they were not held at the ambassadorial level). The satellite states similarly improved their economic and diplomatic relations with the Yugoslavs, concluding border and trade agreements, opening up lines of communications, and normalizing diplomatic relations. And even Yugoslav relations with the People's Republic of China, the most vociferous of Yugoslavia's critics, improved. In the fall of 1954 talks between the Soviets and Yugoslavs started because of Soviet initiative. These talks paved the way for a visit by Nikita Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the CC CPSU, to Belgrade.<sup>126</sup>

In May 1955 Khrushchev visited Yugoslavia. During his speech at the welcoming at the airport he admitted that the Soviet Union was at fault for the split, but laid the blame on Beria, and not Stalin. It has been said that this "apology" was not satisfactory for Tito; that he wanted full responsibility placed on Stalin. This interpretation, however, overlooks the significance of the talks that took place before the visit. It hardly seems possible that some sort of common ground would not have been agreed to before Khrushchev laid his reputation on the line (in the still deadly business of Kremlin politics) by going to Belgrade. Furthermore, the result of the visit—the

Belgrade Declaration—signed by both Tito and Khrushchev, was of enough significance and detail, that it probably could not have been worked out during the short visit and the principles, therefore, were agreed to beforehand.<sup>127</sup>

The Belgrade Declaration was officially a government document, but its contents dealt with some purely party and ideological themes. It recognized that there were “different roads to socialism,” meaning that how a state went about its socialist development could depend on local factors such as history, culture, and economy. It also portrayed the international Communist movement as a fraternal organization. It called for “respect for the sovereignty, independence, integrity, and equality of states in their relations with each other... noninterference in internal affairs for any reason” and recognized that “military blocs increase international tension.”<sup>128</sup> The Yugoslavs would find out that, as many other states did, an agreement with the Soviet Union could have several interpretations. For the Soviets, they were looking at bringing Yugoslavia back into the fold, and eventually, Yugoslavia would recognize Soviet leadership in the movement. From the Soviet point of view, they had taken the first step in reconciliation; it was now up to the Yugoslavs to complete the healing process by submitting to Soviet leadership and returning to the Socialist camp. The Yugoslavs took this declaration at face value and, extending the logic of the provisions of separate roads and fraternity, the declaration meant that the Yugoslavs were justified in their split with the Soviets and that they Belgrade and Moscow were equals. Hopefully, in Yugoslav eyes, this would give them a more prominent role to play in the Balkans and the socialist movement. But such

divergent interpretations of the Belgrade Declaration and the nature and conditions of the rapprochement meant that a renewing of the conflict between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was inevitable. The “many roads” concept of socialist development would be reinforced during Tito’s visit to Moscow in June of the following year. The United States responded to this last development by suspending aid to Yugoslavia in July 1956, but reinstated it in October of that year. Yugoslav-Soviet relations continued to improve with the Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization campaign which included his denunciation of Stalin in his secret speech to the XX Party Congress in 1956, the purging of Stalinists (especially Molotov and Malenkov, whom the Yugoslavs viewed as strongly anti-Tito and the “last obstacle” to a complete healing of relations), as well as a relaxation of policies both domestically and in the satellites. The Bled Pact between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey became a dead letter as a result of the improvement in Soviet-Yugoslav relations.<sup>129</sup>

This relaxation of tensions and policies in the satellites would not last long, however, and would have severe consequences in the satellites, and, in turn, in terms of the relationship with Yugoslavia. A week after the Moscow Declaration was signed, riots broke out in Poznan, Poland. The Soviets issued a secret letter to the CPSU, and also summoned representatives of the satellite parties and “...made it quite clear to the leaders of Eastern Europe that ...[the Moscow Declaration] has no bearing on Soviet policies toward the countries and Communist parties of the ‘camp.’”<sup>130</sup> The lighter hand with which the Soviets dealt with the satellites resulted in a liberalization of the regime in

Hungary in 1956. The liberalization went a bit too far, and the Soviets had to intervene to maintain control of the situation. But once again, the reforms were carried out, and even the regime in Hungary lost control. The reforms escalated into a general uprising and a self-proclaimed separation of Hungary from the Communist camp and democratization. This went way beyond the bounds of what Khrushchev had envisioned in his de-Stalinization program. A second intervention was carried out with the embattled Hungarian leader, Imre Nagy, dramatically requesting assistance from the West in an open radio broadcast.<sup>131</sup>

The Budapest uprising resulted from two mistakes made by both the United States and the Soviet Union. On the Soviet side, Khrushchev greatly underestimated the force of nationalism and the degree of resentment of foreign and oppressive rule that was harbored in the satellites. Even though the latent force of nationalism and resentment toward Soviet imperialistic policies had already manifested itself immediately following Stalin's death in the riots of the German workers, Khrushchev failed to learn the lesson. On the American side, the United States made a mistake in being too aggressive with its rhetoric on rollback. Someone had actually believed that the United States wanted to liberate Eastern Europe by listening to the Voice of America propaganda, and acted on that belief. Of course, the United States did want to liberate Eastern Europe, but it did not want to pay the price that was required—a global, and probably atomic, war—in order to liberate these countries. The conditions in the international environment were right to enable these mistakes to have an effect. The West was distracted during the

playing out of events in Budapest by the Suez Crisis.<sup>132</sup>

The Hungarian uprising threw the Yugoslav-Soviet rapprochement off track. The Soviets now saw clearly the dangers inherent in Titoism/national communism, and realized that if the satellites were to remain in the Soviet camp then strict control over them was necessary. She could not afford to have other Titos gain control. Furthermore, Yugoslavia provided an easy scapegoat for Khrushchev and others to guard themselves against attacks from Stalinists in Kremlin politics. It was much easier to blame Yugoslav deviationism and capitalist counterrevolutionaries than to admit to mistakes in the de-Stalinization program.<sup>133</sup> Yugoslavia, following true to the tenants of different paths to socialism, condemned the first Soviet intervention in Hungary, because although the regime was liberalizing and trying to gain some independence from Moscow (both admirable strivings in Yugoslav eyes), the regime was still trying to stay within the bounds of socialism. But Yugoslavia approved of the second intervention because the Hungarians were attempting to get rid of socialism all together. Therefore the Yugoslavs thought that the second intervention was justified. Despite Yugoslav approval of the second intervention, the Soviets were not satisfied with the Yugoslav attitude toward the first intervention, however, and this became a point of contention between the two. Furthermore, to add a bizarre twist to this tragic series of events, Imre Nagy received asylum in the Yugoslav embassy in Budapest. He held up there for while until the Yugoslavs, receiving a guarantee of safe passage for him, released Nagy. He was immediately detained by Soviet authorities, and in mid-1958 he was tried and executed.

This episode did further damage to the relationship between Belgrade and Moscow.<sup>134</sup>

Relations between the two socialist states continued to worsen, in spite of attempts to prevent the deterioration. "In August 1957 Tito and Khrushchev met in Bucharest and reaffirmed the principles enunciated in Belgrade in 1955."<sup>135</sup> That is, that there are different roads to socialism and that the international Communist movement was fraternal. But even in their attempts to reach some sort of agreement, there was disagreement. The location of this party meeting between the two leaders was chosen because neither one would risk losing face by traveling to the other's country.\* Tito also tried to support the Soviet Union in the area of foreign policy by calling for the abolition of NATO and recognizing the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in October 1957. This latter attempt at currying favor from the Soviet Union had its cost in that the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), a major trading partner of Yugoslavia, broke relations with Yugoslavia, and, in the end, did little to improve relations between Moscow and Belgrade.<sup>136</sup>

Relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia improved after the August 1957 meeting in Bucharest, but this was to be short lived. While there, Tito accepted Khrushchev's invitation to attend the festivities in honor of the fortieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in Moscow that November. A draft resolution that was to be passed at the conference was circulated to all Communist parties before hand, however,

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\* The conference site, Snagov, was also the site of the Cominform conference during which the decision to expel Yugoslavia was taken in 1948. Micunovic, pp. 286 – 289.

and this infuriated Tito. Entitled “The Declaration of Communist Unity,” the document “...reaffirmed [the] authority and leadership of the Soviet Union over other socialist countries and called for a renewed struggle against ‘revisionism’ (the tendency to vary from proscribed dogma).”<sup>137</sup> This initiative, which was strongly supported by the People’s Republic of China, an often-vocal critic of Yugoslav revisionism and the many roads concept, seemed to be directed squarely at the Yugoslavs. “Mao Tse-tung had demanded that the declaration should include the words ‘the camp headed by the Soviet Union...’”<sup>138</sup> This was a phrase that he must have known would be completely unacceptable to the Yugoslav Communists. Furthermore, it was, in effect, a repudiation of the many roads precept and the fraternal party relationship which Tito and Khrushchev had jointly endorsed three times already: in Belgrade in 1955, in Moscow in 1956, and in Bucharest in 1957. Tito refused to attend the conference (again citing illness) and sent two of his subordinates, Kardelj and Rankovic, after he instructed them to not sign the declaration if they were unsuccessful in attempting to change these two contentious articles. They were not successful, and they refused to sign.<sup>139</sup>

The ideological struggle continued, and now it was the Yugoslavs’ turn to hold a conference. The VII Party Conference was held in Ljubljana in April 1958, and during it the Yugoslavs ratified the concepts of nonalignment, peaceful coexistence, and rejected the concept of ideological unity in the Communist movement. The Soviet, Chinese and Eastern European observers stormed out in protest.\* This form of heresy, which was

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\* The Yugoslavs had invited the Soviets, Chinese and East Europeans to send



taken to be a direct challenge to the Soviet program that the Yugoslavs had refused to sign the previous November in Moscow, was not to be tolerated. The Soviets cancelled trade credits valued at \$285 million to Yugoslavia and once again initiated a propaganda war, which the satellites joined, against the Balkan state. Once again another conference provided a forum for criticism, when in Moscow in 1960, eighty-one Communist parties voted to condemn Yugoslav foreign policy because of its combination of the tenets of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence character.<sup>140</sup>

The rapid deterioration of Soviet-Yugoslav relations in 1957 – 58 would lead some observers to speculate that the state of the relationship was once again as bad as it had been during Stalin's time. Although this was a serious breach, it was not as bad as it was during the period of 1948 to 1953. The Soviets were not planning on resorting to an invasion to get rid of Tito, nor were they looking to eliminate him through assassination. There was a serious disagreement, but inter-party relations had been de-Stalinized at least in this respect. Relations between the Soviet bloc and Yugoslavia would remain cool until the Kremlin leadership realized; (1) that the effects of the Sino-Soviet split were permanent and severe, and; (2) that Yugoslavia's prestige in the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) could be used to Soviet advantage in gaining access to the third world. They then set out to improve relations with Yugoslavia. In 1962 the Soviet head of state, Leonid Brezhnev, and the Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, visited Belgrade. Tito returned

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delegations, but this invitation was refused when the Soviets saw a draft of the program that the Yugoslavs intended to adopt. They instead sent their ambassadors in the capacity of observers. Micunovic, pp. 342, 345 – 346, 359, 371.

the favor by going to the Soviet Union that December, and Khrushchev went to Belgrade the following year for the first time since 1955. The propaganda directed against Yugoslavia by the Soviets and their satellites decreased in intensity and frequency, and trade relations between Yugoslavia and the Comecon were opened up, with Yugoslavia receiving associate membership in 1964. Relations were better, but they would never be close. Tito had gone too far down the path of nonalignment and toward the West to go back to the Soviet fold.<sup>141</sup>

#### *Yugoslav-Western Relations*

While Yugoslavia's relations with the Soviet Union after Stalin's death were influenced by fluctuations in Sino-Soviet relations, so too did the West's relations with Yugoslavia fluctuate with the state of Yugo-Soviet relations. When Yugoslavia's relations with the Soviet Union were good, her relations with the United States suffered. When her relations with the Soviets were bad, Yugoslavia's relations with America improved.<sup>142</sup> Unlike her relations with the Kremlin, however, Yugoslavia's relations with the White House did not depend on who was in power. So while Stalin's death marked a major turning point in Yugoslav-Soviet relations, Eisenhower's replacement of Truman in the White House had little effect on the course of Yugoslav-American relations, or even on the course of American foreign policy in general. So, despite all the rhetoric about rolling back the Communists, American foreign policy remained virtually unchanged. In terms of their relations with Yugoslavia, this was also the case, with the

Americans continuing to support Tito's regime in order to drive a wedge between the Soviet Union and the rest of the Soviet bloc, and, in so doing, not interfering with Yugoslav affairs. Where the Eisenhower/Dulles Yugoslav policy differed from the Truman/Acheson policy was in the emphasis placed on enticing Yugoslavia to join NATO; Eisenhower wanted Tito in the alliance.<sup>143</sup> Whereas Tito did not want to join NATO at the time when the threat against him from the Soviets was greatest because he did not want to create a pretext for an attack (and NATO membership would have provided him with little more than what he already had—he already had the promise of American support in the event of a war, and the Bled Pact with Turkey and Greece, signed on 9 August 1954, to provide a deterrent), now Tito had almost no incentive to join the alliance. The threat against him from the Soviet side was not only reduced, but the precondition for a rapprochement—Stalin's death—had also been realized. Tito, wanting vindication for the break that could very well have cost him and thousands of countrymen their lives, had his chance to rejoin the Socialist brotherhood. This was something with which the United States—even with all its aid, money, and technology—could not compete.<sup>144</sup>

This did not mean that the United States did not try. The main sticking point between Yugoslavia and NATO was Yugoslav-Italian relations. And, even though this was a problem, the United States saw NATO planning as a form of engagement that could be used to improve Yugoslav-Italian relations.<sup>145</sup> Although the two states had been getting along well and trading, the issue of the final disposition of Trieste kept the two

from drawing closer. And, indeed, in the military sphere, cooperation between the two was impossible while their armies faced each other in zones A and B of the Free Territory of Trieste. Any movement toward NATO membership for Yugoslavia necessarily meant a resolution of the Trieste question, as this represented a larger threat to Yugoslav-Western relations than did the rapprochement with the Soviets. It was in this context that a settlement over the final disposition of Trieste was finally signed on 5 October 1954.<sup>146</sup>

This shows that, despite Yugoslavia's closer relations with the USSR, the United States still considered the role that Yugoslavia played in relation to the Communist bloc important. This conclusion was reached after some very serious consideration in light of the Yugo-Soviet rapprochement. Still considered important by the Americans, the Yugoslavs continued to receive American aid. Indeed, the general objective of the military aid program was to ensure Yugoslavia's continued independence from the Soviet Union and to orient Yugoslavia militarily toward the West.<sup>147</sup> From 1955 until 1958 they received \$105.4 million in military aid, including two hundred jet fighters (and the requisite training of the pilots). But this does not mean that the aid program and Yugo-American relations went smoothly. They did not, and this can be seen on two levels. The first is the inability of the United States to influence the decisions of the Yugoslav leadership in domestic and foreign affairs, and the second is the hard feelings generated between by the growing anti-Communist sentiment in American domestic politics in regard to the aid program.

Despite the large amount of aid that the United States provided to Yugoslavia,

many Yugoslav policies continued to rankle the American leadership. There are several examples of this. One is the continuation of rhetoric directed against NATO and the United States by the Yugoslavs. The Yugoslav press persisted in accusing NATO of being an anti-Communist bloc. This approach fit in with the Yugoslav approach to nonalignment and active coexistence, and grew along with these policies. Another example is the Yugoslav decision to recognize the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and the People's Republic of China. These were both sensitive topics for the Americans and efforts to dissuade the Yugoslavs from recognizing these two Communist states went for naught. Again, during this time period, the only time that the United States was successful (or thought it was successful) in influencing Yugoslav decision-making was when Yugoslav interests coincided with American interests. The case of Yugoslav support for the Austrian peace treaty is an example of this.<sup>148</sup>

Despite the conclusion that Yugoslavia remained important in Western policy, the aid program became more and more difficult to sustain. One reason was that Tito did not help his case in retaining assistance from the United States by increasing his emphasis on nonalignment. As a State Department telegram to the American Embassy in Belgrade observed, "Basic US objective is to assure as far as possible that substantial military manpower of Yugoslavia will fight on our side in the event of a European war, which is the primary assumption of our present aid programs. [But] Yugoslav armed neutrality..." would probably be an insufficient justification for continuing the aid programs. As early as May 1955 the Central Intelligence Agency judged that the Yugoslav emphasis on

neutrality would grow. And, as it grew, so did the problem of justifying the expenditure of the taxpayers' money in Congress.<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, growing concern over the improvement of Yugoslav relations with the Soviets and American domestic politics complicated matters. After Tito's June 1956 visit to Moscow American military and economic aid to Yugoslavia was suspended. Eisenhower reinstated economic aid in October of that year citing Yugoslavia's independence of the Kremlin's influence and desire to maintain that independence. Eisenhower also did not want to drive Tito back into the arms of Moscow by cutting off alternative sources of aid. Furthermore, the Hungarian crisis demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the rollback policy and the need for other, more peaceful, more "evolutionary," means of separating the Soviets from the satellites that were well represented by Tito and Yugoslav independence. Military aid was resumed the following May, thanks to a cooling of relations between Moscow and Belgrade following the start of the Hungarian crisis, but the state of the aid program would continue to deteriorate.<sup>150</sup>

Tito himself terminated the military aid program toward the end of 1957. The battle in Congress over the military aid package to Yugoslavia had become an annual event, and one that was not all too pleasant for the Yugoslavs. The anti-Communism prevalent in American domestic politics at that time came to fore, and Yugoslavia became a convenient target for congressmen, who either did not understand the nuances of the American policy toward Yugoslavia or who did understand it but realized that their voting constituency did not, to demonstrate their patriotism. The Eisenhower

administration fought to continue the program, but the mudslinging at Yugoslav expense became more than Tito was willing to bear. The issue came to a head when a Senator from Texas discovered that Yugoslav pilots were being trained in his state and he decided to make some political hay over the issue of training Communists in his home state. Thereafter the U. S. sold the planes to Yugoslavia. After this and other raucous debates, which often were not very good for Yugoslav self-esteem, the termination of the aid program probably did more to help Yugo-American relations than its continuation would.<sup>151</sup>

The anti-Communist atmosphere that charged congressional debates over military aid crept into the debates over economic policy as well. From 1957 on, economic aid would mainly be agricultural surpluses under the auspices of the Food for Peace program contained in Public Law 480. But the congressional punishment of Yugoslavia for being Communist was not limited to aid. In mid 1962 amendments were added to a trade bill that not only cancelled all aid to Yugoslavia (which had all but ceased anyway), but also stripped Yugoslavia of most favored nation trade status. Yugoslavia had enjoyed this status for over eighty years, even when it was so hostile toward the United States from 1945 until the split with the Soviet Union in 1948. This American attitude toward Yugoslavia was also demonstrated in the cool reception Tito received from almost everyone except the Kennedy administration when he visited the United States in 1963.<sup>152</sup>

In response to the off again, on again relations with both the Soviets and the

Americans, the Yugoslavs began to turn more and more to the Nonaligned Movement (NAM). NAM provided the Yugoslavs with several benefits. It was easily justifiable within the concepts that the Yugoslav leadership had espoused in justifying the split with Moscow, yet still allowed them to maintain their Communist ideology and remain aloof from the West. It gave the Yugoslavs a forum in the court of international public opinion to try and redress any wrongs done to her by other states (most notably the Soviet Union). And, this was a place where the Yugoslavs could be a big fish in a little pond. It provided the Yugoslavs with a way to garner prestige in the international arena. But these benefits were in many ways intangible, and the benefits that the NAM lacked were the ones that the Yugoslavs really needed to address. NAM did not provide Yugoslavia with trading partners who had hard currency or advanced technology. And the movement itself did not have a truly unifying theme other than an opposition to military blocs. Nonalignment was not an ideology; it was simply neutralism, a concept that did little to promote unity. The interests of the states in the movement, therefore, were as diverse as their geographic locations. NAM seemed to offer the Yugoslavs a way out of being stuck in the middle of the struggles between the two superpowers, but it was not a very viable or profitable option.<sup>153</sup>



*Testing of Balance of Threat Hypotheses*

The period of 1954 – 1964 was a time of substantially reduced threat to Yugoslavia. With the death of Stalin, Yugoslav relations improved with the Soviet Union. Even when relations took a turn for the worse again after the Hungarian crisis in 1956, they would never be as bad as they had been from the time of the split in 1948 until Stalin's death in 1953. There would never again be the threat of invasion. This reduced threat should, and does, affect the outcomes that balance of threat theory predicts.

The reduction of the threat that the Soviet Union represented reduced the need for the Yugoslavs to turn to the West to counter the threat. There was no need for the Yugoslavs to seek a stronger alliance with the West, or even to continue the alliance they did have in the Bled Pact, or even to seek a continuation of military aid. The global balance of power was less of a concern for the Yugoslavs than the regional balance. Therefore, when her neighbors demobilized after the plans for invading Yugoslavia were aborted, Yugoslavia could afford to be less concerned with countering threats. We therefore see an increase in the influence of ideology over Yugoslav policy choices.

Yugoslavia, seeking affirmation in the socialist world, turned again to the Soviet Union once Stalin died. Stalin or no Stalin, however, the very nature of the Communist movement prevented a true brotherhood between parties and states, and Yugoslavia was again faced with the choice of surrendering independence or a place in the Communist movement. Once again it chose the independent path. The United States, with the institutionalization of the Cold War, and the rise of other poles within the Communist

movement in the form of the Sino-Soviet split, could now afford to allow anti-Communism to influence foreign policy without serious detriment, and therefore domestic politics overrode the need to continue to support Yugoslavia.

Once again foreign aid provided donors with little leverage over recipients. The United States, despite providing approximately one billion dollars in aid, had little say over Yugoslavia's foreign or domestic policy. Examples such as Yugoslav decisions to recognize the GDR, to continue to criticize American foreign policy, and to not release religious figures despite US pressure demonstrate the ineffectiveness of American leverage. Not only did aid fail to provide the United States with an effective means of influencing Yugoslav foreign policy, but it also failed to improve relations between the two states. Quite the contrary, American aid to Yugoslavia came to poison relations between the two states as the congressional battles over that aid continued. This in turn demonstrates the validity of the prediction that democratic states have more trouble in tying aid to foreign policy objectives.

**Balance of Threat Theory**  
**Hypotheses, Predictions and Outcomes**  
**1953 - 1964**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Prediction</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
States balance against threats	States that represent a threat will provoke an alliance	--USSR poses less of threat against SFRY, alignment with West weakens --Titoism seen as threat by USSR, 2d Yugo-Soviet split --Sino-Soviet split leads USSR to try to improve relations with SFRY	Affirmed
	Stronger states will balance, weaker will bandwagon	Yugo-Soviet split continues, Hungarian uprising fails	Affirmed
Ideology subordinate to threat in alliance choices	States will create alliances for security, not for ideological reasons	US and SFRY align against USSR	Affirmed
	Similar states will ally (provided security condition is met)	--USSR less of a threat, leads to rapprochement --Titoism a threat, 2d split	Affirmed
Aid and penetration are no causes for alignment	Alliances in Communist movement will be fragile	Yugo-Soviet split continues	Affirmed
	States that are internally and externally secure will seek ideological alliances	Satellite leaders see deStalinization as threat	Affirmed
	Aid and penetration will not determine alignment	Western aid to SFRY did not determine alliance	Affirmed
	Donor will have leverage through aid only when recipient threatened	UK and US little leverage over SFRY	Affirmed
	Decentralized states will have trouble using aid for leverage	US aid to SFRY cancelled	Affirmed
	Penetration harder against closed societies	SFRY able to restrict US penetration	Affirmed
	Penetration will be seen as threat if intentions are not limited	US not even given chance to gain significant penetration	Affirmed

Table 4

## Conclusion

The case of Yugoslavia in East-West relations during the early Cold War provides strong support for balance of threat theory, especially the central hypothesis of that theory that states will balance against the greatest threat regardless of ideology, foreign aid, or penetration (or even because of penetration). States do not necessarily balance against power alone, but against the power that represents the greatest threat to its security and that is why Yugoslavia chose to become a de facto ally of the United States, the most powerful state in the world at the time, when it found itself the very likely target of Soviet aggression. This may be due to total aggregate resources or geographic proximity or military might, but the key ingredient here is that a state must perceive another state as having hostile intentions. It is the perception of hostile intentions that is really doing the work here. Once the perception of threat wanes, the alignment is likely to break up. This is what happened to the Grand Alliance at the end of World War II, and to the informal alliance between NATO and Yugoslavia after Stalin's death.

But it is not just systemic factors that are at work here. Ideology, although subordinate to threat perceptions as a motive for alliance formation, does play a role. However fragile a centralized movement may be, the belief in the ideology still influences the decisions that leaders make. That explains Tito's hope of someday rejoining the Socialist brotherhood of nations in spite of the propaganda attacks, the assassination plots, the border conflicts, the economic boycotts and the invasion plans.

It demonstrates that the greater the threat, the less influence ideology will have on foreign policy decisions, and that alliances built on centralized ideologies are fragile things, and conversely, that once the threat lessens, ideology will play a more significant role.

Yugoslavia's involvement in the Nonaligned Movement also shows that movements that have very little in common to unify them—be it an ideology, economic interests, or a threat to ally against—have little chance of staying coherent.

Another important lesson to be taken from all this on the unit level is just how important the state as actor is in the selection of policy outcomes. The strength that Tito's regime enjoyed in domestic legitimacy and defensive advantage because of terrain and military power enabled him to choose a separate road. No other state in the Communist camp could have done that because they did not enjoy the advantages that Tito did.<sup>154</sup> The exception to this, of course, is the People's Republic of China, which also broke from Moscow a decade after Yugoslavia did. Furthermore, this case demonstrates that non-democratic states enjoy a greater freedom in the foreign policy sphere than do democratic states. Tito and Stalin enjoyed a flexibility in policy options that simply would not be there for a democratic regime. That this is true is reflected by the difficulty the United States had in sustaining the foreign aid program to Yugoslavia in the face of anti-Communism in domestic politics.

Walt's hypothesis concerning foreign aid and penetration hold true in this case also. Foreign aid provides a donor with little leverage over the recipient, especially if there is the perception that the recipient is more valuable to the donor than the donor is to

the recipient. Yugoslav leaders understood the intent of the Western wedge strategy and her role in that strategy. She played it for all it was worth, often reminding the West of her value as an *independent* socialist state in Western strategy whenever the United States tried to influence her decisions. Finally, this case strongly demonstrates that foreign penetration will do little to cement a relationship between two states, and that if the penetration is too aggressive—if the intentions of the penetration are perceived as hostile—then the penetration can even cause an alliance to split apart.

The case of Yugoslavia in East-West relations in the early Cold War supports Walt's balance of threat theory and shows that the theory provides a scientific explanation of alliance choices and is intuitively sound.

#### *Levels of Analysis, the Scientific Approach and the Realist Tradition*

The fundamental cause of the Soviet-Yugoslav split was the dispute over who would control Yugoslavia: Stalin or Tito. Until the Cominform expelled Yugoslavia in June 1948, the United States presumed the Communists to be monolithic. The split dispelled this conception (for the most part, although the mythic monolith continued to play a role in the rhetoric of domestic politics until the 1980's), and provided the United States with the opportunity to not only subtract an asset from the Soviet side of the ledger, but to add it to its own side. Furthermore, the possibility of further splitting up the Communist camp seemed to be achievable. With the help of the Yugoslav example, more debits could be subtracted from the Communist ledger and added to the American.

In the worst case, even if states could not be wooed into the Western camp, they would at least not belong to the Communist camp. But this would be unlikely because there were only two ways to liberate the East European states: either the Soviets would have to release their iron grip on the satellites voluntarily, or the United States would have to go to war to conquer and liberate the territory. Either way, the consequences of these actions would have been so dire that there was no real chance that either side would initiate such a course.

This made the option of using Yugoslavia as an example to the satellites in order to drive a wedge between them and Moscow that much more attractive to the United States. American policy, therefore, set about to support the Yugoslav bid for independence from Moscow. Economic aid began to flow to the Balkans. When the threat to Yugoslavia from her neighbors and the Soviet Union grew—and the North Korean invasion made it seem more plausible—military aid followed. For five years Communist Yugoslavia struggled against the Communist Soviet Union, and almost the entire time she was supported in that bid by the United States. The United States, careful not to spoil a good thing, made this commitment practically unconditionally so as not to make the same mistake that the Soviet Union had made.

Because Tito and Stalin held each other personally responsible for the split, and would never again deal with each other in any manner, shape or form, Stalin's death unlocked the door for a possible rapprochement. This was important for Tito because he was a Communist. Yugoslavia was communist. Yugoslavia should belong in the

brotherhood of Communist states. But, as Thomas Wolfe said, "You can never really go home again."<sup>155</sup> In this case, there were at least three reasons why Yugoslavia could not return to the fold. First, even though Soviet leaders had changed, Soviet policies had not. They still wanted Yugoslavia to give up her independence—maybe not all of her independence—but at least more than Tito was willing to give up, especially after heavily investing his credibility at home to pay for that independence. Secondly, Western strategy in this instance was correct: Yugoslavia did provide an example and a precedent for other satellite states to try to gain their freedom. Poland and Hungary took advantage of the loosened bonds that the de-Stalinization campaign afforded and tried to follow this example in 1956. The Soviets could not allow the disruptive influence that Yugoslavia provided to continue. Third, Yugoslavia was not the only potential rival for leadership in the Communist laager—China's star was rising, and Khrushchev had to keep that in check. In order to keep them happy, he needed to cool his relationship with the Yugoslav "revisionists."

The delicate tightrope between East and West that Yugoslavia was negotiating was tenuous at best. One slip and the game was done. And the slip did not need to occur on the Yugoslavs' part either. If either East or West decided to change their policies, then this could have dire consequences for the Yugoslavs also. For this reason, she turned more and more to the UN, and the Third World nations in the form of the Non-aligned movement. In this way they hoped to gain a measure of safety through collective security and the international court of public opinion. But this method was fleeting. The



diverse nations around the globe had little in common other than economic problems (which there was little they could do to help each other) and anti-colonialism (which became less and less important as colonies more and more often became former colonies). Although Yugoslavia remained active in NAM, this tack did not provide the benefits that Tito had hoped for—either in security or in prestige.

Likewise, the Moscow-Peking split also limited Yugoslavia's utility on the world stage. The importance of this Balkan backwater paled in comparison to a country that contained one-fourth of the world's population. Although the dispute with the Chinese would propel the Soviets to try to repair their relations with the Yugoslavs, once again, a permanent fix was not possible. The United States also saw diminishing returns in supporting the Yugoslavs, and the pain of fighting the domestic battles to garner that support finally overcame the strategic value of supporting the regime. The aid program died.

So, what does all this mean? It is certainly an interesting bit of history. But are there any trends in here that we can use to illuminate our understanding of international politics? Let's look at it from the top down.

I believe that a systemic analysis provides a satisfactory explanation for the case of Yugoslavia in East-West relations during the early Cold War. Taken within the framework of East-West relations, all forms of systems-level theory provide understanding of the struggle between the Eastern and Western blocs. The two most powerful nations in the world, perceiving a threat, tried to maximize their security. The

lesser states also felt threatened, and banded together against the threat. Yugoslavia, one of these lesser states, was threatened with the de facto, if not de jure, loss of her independence and sovereignty and also turned to balancing tactics to ensure her security. In short, power politics was at work in all its forms: balance of power, limitations of power, zero-sum games, domino theories, etc.,

Unit level theories also provide satisfactory explanations. Ideology played a role in this story, even if it was a subordinate one to balancing against threats. That the ideology and very nature of the Communist movement played a part in determining outcomes on the international level is shown in this case. The nature of the movement was fractious. Disputes that would not be of major import among other states became extremely serious matters in the Communist bloc. And yet, even when there were such disputes, the belief in the ideology was so strong that outcasts such as Tito were attracted back to movement again and again. In his mind he knew it would not work out to go back, but his heart told him differently.

Which brings us to the influence that individuals can play in foreign affairs. While everything can be logically explained in terms of systems or unit level factors in this case, could any of this been possible without certain individuals? Without Hitler, would there even have been a Second World War, and the subsequent power vacuum that contributed to the Cold War? Who could say with any amount of certainty that the Cold War would have come about at all without the paranoia of Stalin? Would the Communist movement have been different if such a control-hungry, vicious, depraved Machiavellian

had not eliminated all his foes and risen to the top of the fatherland of socialism after Lenin's death? "A man who had subjected all activities in his own country to his views and to his personality, Stalin could not behave differently outside...he could not act in foreign affairs other than a hegemonist."<sup>156</sup> And if there was ever a case of a state reflecting the persona of its leader, it was surely postwar Yugoslavia. That Yugoslavia occupied a place on the world stage way out of proportion to the resources and means at her disposal reflects the ego of the spotlight-seeking former locksmith Tito. It can be argued quite convincingly that he alone could have kept the various nationalities of the Yugoslav federation living together peacefully after the interethnic bloodletting that took place during the fascist occupation of that state. That this Croat could promote the idea of a Yugoslav "nationality" and keep his peoples living together more or less peacefully for thirty-five years was a major accomplishment, one that was tragically wasted a decade after his death.

To say that only one of these interpretations is *the* explanation in this case is to miss the point that in this particular instance conditions at all levels created an inertia that propelled the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia into conflict. I think that all these factors combined and reinforced each other. You can see them all at work at different times, and in many instances at the same time—creating a synergy and reinforcing each other. This frame of reference does not lend itself to parsimony; but then again, the story of Soviet-Yugoslav-American relations is not a simple one. These actors in this case were driven by a number of things: security, power, economics, nationalism, ideology and

personality, to name but a few. The importance of these factors varied at different points in time, but often they created a momentum that carried Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union down certain policy paths that led to confrontation, and the United States tried to take advantage of that dispute.

Yugoslavia's main goal was to maintain itself as a communist state free of outside interference and to achieve a high profile in the international political system. So the two key words that describe her policy goals are independence and prestige. Or, in realist terms, security and power. In almost all of her policies, at least one of these two variables is at work. Ideology shaped Yugoslavia's understanding of these variables—she never forgot that she was an *independent* communist state, and she would not let others forget it either. Nationalism (an ideology) certainly shaped the path Yugoslavia decided to take in forming a socialist state.

For the Soviet Union, its policies vis-à-vis Yugoslavia were also based on security and power. Security in one sense meant shaping a world communist movement not unlike the communist movement as it evolved in the Soviet Union. There is only one head, and anything that threatens unity and discipline must be removed. Stalinism is certainly at work in shaping this definition of security. In another sense, security means not starting World War III. In international power politics, Yugoslavia represented a prize in the zero-sum game being played with the United States. And again, ideology provided the framework for this bipolar struggle. But the security interest took priority over the power interest. No matter how great the prize, the Soviet Union was not willing

to endanger the stability of the communist camp or willing to get into a shooting war with the United States in order to win. It didn't matter whether the prize was Yugoslavia, Berlin, Cuba or something else.

What this all means is that, while a purely systemic analysis of Yugoslavia's role between East and West in the early Cold War period can be used to explain the outcomes we have seen, it is not satisfying. It cannot account for the forces at work at the unit and individual level that strengthened and reinforced international power politics. And although the focus of this work is to test the viability of balance of threat theory, the conclusion that Neorealism is less than satisfactory for this reason, seems to me to be too obvious and important not to comment on.

To review, Neorealism is a scientific inductive approach intended to help increase our understanding of international politics. It focuses on the structure of the state system and the distribution of capabilities among the states in that system. All other unique characteristics of the states are placed in a "black box," that is they are irrelevant to our understanding of the outcomes played out on the international stage. Much like the economic theory it is based upon, Neorealism does not find the identity of the buyers and sellers important to the eventual price that the market commands. The "invisible hand" that Adam Smith cited as governing the market place is also at work in the international security market.

Walt's take on Neorealist theory tries to open the box a bit, and help us understand the how the invisible hand operates. His theory tries to show why the buyers

(threatened states) feel the need to go out in the market for security. Further, he tries to show how the relationship works between the buyers and sellers. His theory, although locked in the rigors of the scientific structure, is deductive. And, therefore, he is open to looking at factors below the systems level in order to provide better understanding; providing that these factors can be gleaned from the historical record.

Realism in the classical form likewise focuses on the workings of power politics, but does not emphasize the state as actor or the structure of the states' system exclusive of all other factors. These core assumptions are arrived at deductively through an examination of historical empirical evidence.

So what does each one of these theories have to offer in this instance? They all provide adequate predictions of state behavior. That is, how the Soviet Union, the United States, and Yugoslavia conducted themselves during the early Cold War period affirm all three theories. If we look at the predictions these theories' hypotheses generate, they perform well. However, some promote greater understanding than others.

In the case of Waltz's structural realism, his theory does predict the demonstrated outcomes. We need not look at the ideologies, the regimes, or the leaders involved to foresee the policies each state would pursue in general terms. In a generic world dominated by two superpowers, states A and B, if state C felt threatened by one of those states, we would indeed expect C to turn toward the other superpower to ensure its' security.

Balance of threat theory provides the same predictions, but we can understand

better what is going on. The states are no longer all vanilla, now we can see why one state proceeds on a course of balancing. The threat is identified, and what makes that threat appear dangerous is defined. So the two superpowers—the two states with the most aggregate and offensive power, the ones who see the other superpower as having aggressive intentions—seek to balance against each other. Likewise, a smaller ally of one of those superpowers, in this case Yugoslavia, starts to see its ally as a threat. It has much more aggregate and military power, and the larger state's imperialist policies represent aggressive intentions. So the smaller state turns to the other superpower, which is not as close geographically, for support. This occurs even though the ideology of the second superpower previously represented a threat to the smaller state, but, and this is significant, that ideology did not represent as much of a threat as the imperialism of the first superpower. This provides us much greater understanding of the workings of international politics by illuminating the role that threat perceptions plays in alignment choices, and a greater understanding of international politics than Neorealism can provide. It is intuitively sound.

Classical Realism also predicts that small Yugoslavia would turn to the United States to help ensure its' continued independence, and also helps us understand why she considered the Soviet Union a threat. But Classical Realism throws light on other phenomena as well. We can see how the power vacuum in central Europe exacerbated the natural tendencies of great powers to eye each other distrustfully. We can look at the nature of the regimes to help provide further understanding (the legitimacy that the

Yugoslav Communists enjoyed for example).

Classical realism is less constrained by the rigors of “scientific structure” in examining international relations. Its focus on power politics often leads critics to the observation that it does not adequately take second and third image factors into account. This is incorrect. Classical Realism is deductive, and as such, takes into account the lessons of history, whether those lessons have to do with the balance of power or the influence of regime types, or the role that an individual can play in affecting outcomes on the international level. In this sense balance of threat theory is related to realism. Where they differ is in the level of influence of the scientific approach on the examination of history. We have returned to the Second Debate. I applaud Walt for his attempt at increasing our understanding of international relations, and I believe that the case of Yugoslavia in the early Cold War supports his balance of threat theory. However, I will always find it difficult to understand how one could ever measure the evil of a Hitler, or quantify the persona of a Stalin, or to operationalize the depth of belief in an ideology, or even to scientifically determine how large of a threat one state perceives another state to be.



## Endnotes

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<sup>131</sup> Micunovic, pp. 77, 133.

<sup>132</sup> Micunovic, pp. 134, 146.

<sup>133</sup> Micunovic, pp. 77 – 78, 86, 150, 165.

<sup>134</sup> Johanna Granville, "Tito and the Nagy Affair in 1956," in *East European Quarterly*, Spring 1998, volume 32, number 1, p. 33, Micunovic, pp. 128, 135, 143 – 144, 149, 169 - 170.

<sup>135</sup> Yugoslav Area Handbook, p. 281.

<sup>136</sup> Yugoslav Area Handbook, p. 281; Micunovic, pp. 303 - 305.

<sup>137</sup> Yugoslav Area Handbook, p. 281.

<sup>138</sup> Micunovic, p. 319.

<sup>139</sup> Yugoslav Area Handbook, p. 281; Campbell, p. 41, Micunovic, pp. 293, 299.

<sup>140</sup> Yugoslav Area Handbook, p. 281, Micunovic, pp. 360, 365, 375.

<sup>141</sup> Yugoslav Area Handbook, p. 283; George F. Kennan, Memoirs, 1950 – 1963, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), p. 279; Rubinstein, p. 78.

<sup>142</sup> Campbell, pp. 43 – 44.

<sup>143</sup> Lees, pp. 121 – 122.

<sup>144</sup> Kennan pp. 278; Lees, pp. 138 - 139.

<sup>145</sup> FRUS, 1952 – 1954, Volume VIII, pp. 244 - 246; FRUS, 1955 – 1957, Volume XXVI, pp. 611 – 612, 614, 632, 637.

<sup>146</sup> Lees, pp. 131, 141 – 142; FRUS, 1952 – 1954, Volume VIII, pp. 1310 - 1311.

<sup>147</sup> FRUS, 1955 – 1957, Volume XXVI, pp. 612 – 613, 640.

<sup>148</sup> FRUS, 1952 – 1954, Volume VIII, p. 1327, 1330 - 1335; FRUS, 1955 – 1957, Volume XXVI, pp. 616 - 617.

<sup>149</sup> FRUS, 1955 – 1957, Volume XXVI, p. 640, 645 - 646.

<sup>150</sup> Campbell, pp. 35 – 36, 39, 43 – 44; Lees, pp. 192, 201, 207.

<sup>151</sup> Kennan, 280 – 290; Campbell, pp. 43 – 44; Lees, pp. 196, 200 – 201, 220.

<sup>152</sup> Kennan, pp. 293 – 297, 313 – 316.

<sup>153</sup> For an in-depth analysis of Yugoslavia's involvement in the Non-aligned Movement see Alvin Rubinstein, Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), concerning Yugoslav motives and limitations see pp. 72 – 74, 76 – 78, 81 – 85, 322 - 325.

<sup>154</sup> See Christopher D. Jones, Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe, (New York: Praeger, 1981).

<sup>155</sup> Quoted in Thompson, Traditions and Values, p. 202.

<sup>156</sup> Djilas, pp. 132 – 133.

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